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APRIL & MAY RECORDS

By THE EDITOR

MY remark last month about "hyenas nosing in the entrails of dead lions" provoked such a loud roaring from Mr. Ernest Newman in response, unaccompanied by the least suggestion of laughter, that I am bound to suppose he was anxious to convince me, once and for all, of his own zoological status. He really need not have put himself to such an expense of breath. Readers of THE GRAMOPHONE know that I have always regarded Mr. Newman as a lion and invited them to regard him as one, so that it never occurred to me that he could possibly confuse himself in his own mind with an hyena. Unfortunately, with a table groaning under the weight of two months' records, I cannot devote the space I should like to devote to a long argument. But, in justice to myself, it seems advisable to point out that I have never defended idealized portraits of great men. My contention is that the present fashion in biography lays an undue emphasis on what is base or petty or ridiculous in genius. There is a mean between sentimental glozing and this monotonous

denigration, and the truth is as much maltreated by the one method as the other. So far as Wagner is concerned I make no protest. He left his own body to the dissecting-room when he wrote that autobiography, and the surgeons are entitled to claim him. At the same time, when I read such a sentence as this:

Let us hope that in the disturbance Wagner's first and only thought was for Minna, and that, with his arm round her dainty waist, he had taken her for cover and for safety into the orchestra, possibly behind the big drum,

I ask myself if some of these surgeons are not merely facetious quacks. That is an extract from the latest life of Wagner by William Wallace. The vulgarity of such writing may seem incredible to those who know Mr. William Wallace's other work, but it can be matched on many other pages of this lamentable little book, which is a typical product of the contemporary fashion.

Mr. Newman thinks that our appreciation of the *G minor Quintet* will be heightened by listening at the keyhole of Mozart's bedroom. I think that

the relations between a man and his wife may be taken for granted. There are, however, plenty of people to agree with Mr. Newman, and with a certain amount of malicious pleasure I will quote one of his supporters who, commenting in *The Clarion* on the argument between him and myself, says: "Mozart's 'purity of thought and style' has been drummed into us so often that it comes as a relief to know that he was capable of writing letters to his young wife of so outspoken a nature that feverish attempts were made to erase certain passages for ever. When listening to *The Marriage of the (sic) Figaro* and the *G minor Symphony* in future, with our thoughts fixed as usual on 'angelic beauty,' we shall find this information distinctly (*sic*) useful. It is comforting to know that when next we hear Mozart we need not strive so energetically to push our heads into the clouds, and that our feet will be quite in order if they do not show a desire to clink (*sic*) tenaciously to good solid earth.

"As with Mozart so with Beethoven and others. And when we find ourselves in the 'religious' atmosphere of *Parsifal*, with its absurd accompaniment of bated breath, awed silence, and prohibited applause, we can keep our balance, and gain a great deal of amusement, by reminding ourselves that Wagner was an awful little liar with (as Mr. Newman so drastically puts it) 'the morals of a monkey.'"

After this, further argument on my part would be otiose, but those who care to read some remarks of mine on the sensitiveness of critics will find them in *The Sackbut*. For my part I find it a relief to get back to the records of the *Jupiter Symphony*, with which Parlophone completes the trio. My impression is that neither it nor the *E flat* is so successful as the *G minor* was in this series. The issue of Strauss' *Macbeth* by the same company was a most valuable contribution to our library, though I cannot say I feel that Strauss brings it off. I was reminded all through of the fighting parts of *Heldenleben*. I wish I had heard it in the concert-room. As it is, it sounds more like *Love's Labour Lost* than *Macbeth*. The most "sporting" effort of these two months was the issue by Vocalion of Tchaikovsky's *Pianoforte Concerto in B flat minor*. The recording is good, but somehow there is a kind of deadness about the playing, both by the soloist, who is Sapellnikoff, and the orchestra. The effect on me is that Mr. Chapple, the conductor, was overcome by the importance of the occasion—or perhaps the blame rests with the soloist. Candidly, I am most anxious to be enthusiastic, because this won second place in our voting for concertos, and it is a most ungrateful task to hum and haw about it. However, this Vocalion issue is better than the H.M.V. issue of the Schumann concerto and better than

the Columbia Third Beethoven; but it's idle to try to bewitch oneself into putting it higher than the second class of pianoforte concertos available for the gramophone. Grieg's *Lyric Suite* from H.M.V. sounds like early new recording, but *Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine* ranks with *The Fire Music*. I'm hoping we shall have the *Entry of the Gods* and *Siegfried's Funeral March* presently. By the way, I cordially agree with one of our correspondents that the break in *The Fire Music* was most unhappily chosen. But what records these are! I received to-day a most enthusiastic letter about them from that die-hard correspondent I quoted last month. I understand that our expert committee are getting splendid results with small sound-boxes from these records. I shall be much interested to hear the results, because I'm bound to say that down here all my small sound-boxes fail, and that ignominiously. I find also, and this is the experience of several correspondents, that the small sound-boxes are apt to wear the records with special ferocity. But in fairness to small sound-boxes, I should mention that several correspondents are convinced that the H.M.V. No. 4 wears them just as ferociously.

The most important orchestral work from Columbia during these two months was Vaughan Williams's *London Symphony*. It is a work I enjoy less with every repetition. In all Vaughan Williams's work I am repelled by the self-consciousness. Many people do not object to this in an author or composer. They find other qualities which more than make up for it. I become obsessed by it, and blind or deaf to everything else. These are a fine set of records, and I hope they will have the appreciation they deserve. The antipathy I have for this composer's work is temperamental, and I have no desire to play the panjandrum about it. We had two *Merry Wives of Windsor* overtures. Both are equally good, and I cannot advise anybody to pay the extra two shillings for Sir Henry Wood in the Columbia version, when the H.M.V. plum-coloured one at 4s. 6d. is good enough for anybody. On the other hand, I recommend Grieg's *Norwegian Dances* conducted by Georg Schneevoigt over the *Lyric Suite* mentioned above. These two records are among the more successful of the Columbia new recordings. I notice that the "stereoscopic" effect is extolled again in the bulletin, and this reminds me that I was severely taken to task by a correspondent for my uncomplimentary remarks about stereoscopic photography two or three months ago. He said I was evidently unaware of the quality of modern stereoscopic photography. And indeed I was; but if it is as much better than the original as these new recordings are than the first new recordings, it has indeed made a great advance. I think Mr. Ernest Newman's blustering

article in the *Sunday Times* of April 25th must have had a sedative effect on me, for I feel strongly disinclined to be anything but unusually polite to everybody this month. As a little boy I was once travelling in an omnibus with my young brother, when an elderly gentleman in the corner suddenly sneezed with extreme loudness a fountainous sneeze over all his fellow travellers. There was a moment's silence before one nervously unrolled his umbrella and another anxiously gathered close his mackintosh. Then my brother put his hand up to his mouth and said in an awestruck voice, "I beg your pardon." I feel in the same mood of vicarious politeness as he in that omnibus somewhere round 1890. However, I really must be rude to Mr. Baynton for his Shakespearian record, which is the first response made to our correspondent's appeal for the spoken word on records. It is bad enough to mix up three of Shakespeare's speeches from different plays in a farrago which he calls *Shakespeare's War Cry*, but it is adding insult to injury to elocute the mixture as badly as Mr. Baynton does. On the other side his *Seven Ages* is either monotonous or ventriloquial. And as for *Alas, poor Yorick*, well, alas, poor Yorick! Mr. Baynton is one of many, and the reason why Shakespeare is so often a failure in modern London will be manifest to anybody who hears this Vocalion record. Alas, poor Yorick!

The string quartet has been the chief disappointment of the new recording. The best so far is Haydn's *G major (Op. 76, No. 1)* with which the Budapest Quartet make their debut, but the gain of the 'cello and viola is thrown away by the two violins. But what playing! I have not the heart to disparage too much the Lener Quartet, because that touch of "cheapness" in their playing (not in their records!) has been of the greatest service in making conversions among the heathen. At the same time, when we get such quality as the Budapest Quartet give us, the Lener combination sound as if they were playing in De Groot's *galère*. I hope that what the latest development of the new recording has effected with the orchestra in these Wagner records of Albert Coates will shortly be done for the string quartet. Columbia has failed as conspicuously as H.M.V. in this direction; but the two records of Tertis and Murdoch in Dohnanyi's sonata issued in May are definitely better than the *Kreutzer* and the Mozart sonata of H.M.V. This is a jolly work written for violin and piano originally, but most successfully adapted to the viola. It reminds me of Grieg rather, and so far my enjoyment of it has grown with each repetition. Yes, up to date these records are certainly the best in newly recorded chamber music. Of old style chamber music recordings during these two months, I should place the Handel

sonata for two violins and piano first. I have no need to repeat my admiration for d'Aranyi and Fachiri in these columns. They are at their very best in this work, and with Ethel Hobday at the piano and the Vocalion recording both at their best, the result is delightful. I strongly recommend these two records. The London String Quartet's performance of the *Second Rasoumovsky* quartet was nothing like as good as the performance of it by the Virtuoso Quartet. Here is a case where duplication is thoroughly tiresome, especially when we are still without any of the *Third Rasoumovsky* except the *Fugue*. The N.G.S. has done the First. How much pleasanter for everybody when after hearing Haydn *Op. 76, No. 1* by the Budapest Quartet we find the Lener Quartet playing *Op. 76, No. 2*! It happens, moreover, to be one of the most delightful performances that the Lener people have given us. Such music seems to come in its season like the birds, and in listening to the whitethroats by day, to Haydn by night, life assumes a pattern that not even a general strike can confuse. These records, of course, come from Columbia.

Of instrumental music perhaps the palm must be given to the Backhaus record of *Liebestraum* and Dohnanyi's arrangement of Delibes' *Naila* waltz. I gather that H.M.V. thinks this is the best piano record they have yet published, and yet when I play over once the Moisevitch record of the Chopin *Scherzo* I'm inclined to give that the preference, because the *Scherzo* was surely a more difficult feat to bring off than the other. Anyway, I think we may assume that the resistance of the piano to recording has been overcome, and I have little doubt but that presently we shall find hardly anything to criticise except the interpretation.

Of vocal records, to my mind the outstanding one of these two months was the Columbia record of the Don Cossacks in the *Volga Boatsong* and a folk-song, *Monotonously Rings the Little Bell*. I confess I am rather astonished that this record has not been featured among the Columbia wonders of the world. It is far superior to any choral record that Columbia has published—or any other house for that matter. I would not have believed that I was any longer capable of putting on a *Volga Boatsong* for pleasure, and having recently erected a goat-stable I was considering the possibility of roofing it with my collection of *Volga Boatsongs*. But this is worth all other *Volga Boatsongs* put together, and on the second side is one of the most enchanting melodies I have ever heard. Finally, if anything more is needed to make you buy this record before any others issued in April and May, I may tell you it only costs 4s. 6d. This is one of the really good things that come along. Don't miss it. I was disappointed by the Westminster Abbey records, and they are perilously near to a

genuine old-fashioned "blast" once or twice. I did not think they were nearly as good as the Albert Hall choral record.

Of vocal solos during April and May there is nothing that stands out like Miss Suddaby's delicious record of *Nymphs and Shepherds*, but whatever she sings has an individual charm and her new record of two modern songs in the old manner should not be overlooked. There was an excellent record of the death scene from *Bohème* sung by Schipa and Bori. Red Italian celebrities are becoming rare in the H.M.V. bulletins. This record is thoroughly satisfactory from every point of view. So, too, is that of Maartje Offers in two arias from *Samson et Dalila*. She does not possess one of those extremely contralto voices, and I like her better for that. Clara Serena in the Vocalion list is another one nearer to a *mezzo*. Her *O don fatale* and *Voce di donna o d'angelo* are particularly good. But the contralto record (and once again a *mezzo* rather than a contralto) I liked best is to be found in the Aco list. This is Elsie Francis-Fisher singing Schumann's *Die Nussbaum*, which I had always translated (wrongly?) as *The Walnut Tree*, but which in this record becomes *The Hazel Tree*. On the other side is Brahms' *Wiegenlied* (also in English), and all lovers of *lieder* should make haste to spend half-a-crown on Miss Francis-Fisher. Now, Miss Fisher, make haste yourself and be the first to give us Schumann's *He was the noblest of them all*, the German of which I cannot recall for the moment, but you must know it. It is a woman's song and has a lovely melody. Why nobody has sung it for the gramophone I cannot imagine. You will easily find another Schumann for the other side. For sentimental reasons I welcomed Miss Edna Thornton in Hope Temple's *Old Garden*, which, thirty years ago, held me entranced. Alas, the magic has evaporated, and left only a smell of mildew; and surely it was meant for one of the more lachrymose tenors, rather than an austere contralto; but never mind, it was pleasant to hear it again. Talking of tenors, I wonder why some of them do not search among Sims Reeves' successes. Adelaide Proctor's *Three Roses* and *I had a message to send her* occur to me. Lots of good honest sobs there. And why, why does not one of them sing *Maid of Athens*? The last would suit Mr. Peter Dawson even better. I commend it to his memory. "*By those tresses unconfin'd woo'd by each Aegean wind.*" He would sing those words with more conviction than he could manage when he was pretending to be less than dust beneath somebody's chariot wheels. I was grateful to Mr. Roy Henderson for giving us the *Freebooter Songs*. They should have a popular success, for he sings them excellently, and the Vocalion recording is good. I care for Miss Luella Paikin less the more I hear of her. Her two Mozart arias are only in the second class. Miss Destournel

failed with three delightful Irish songs arranged by Herbert Hughes. Has she ever heard John McCormack sing that *Ballynure Ballad*? I cannot believe she has. Of the Columbia singers, Stracciari's *Te Deum* from *La Tosca* was not so good as another Columbia record of it by Cesare Formichi. For some reason I do not find in the May bulletin those really excellent operatic records issued by Columbia. They were reviewed by Mr. Klein, and I thoroughly endorse all he says about them. The *Gendarmes' Duet* by Frank Mullings and Norman Allin was a poor affair. The words, essential in such a song, were only occasionally distinguishable. "One of the funniest things imaginable," says the bulletin. It may have been in the recording room, but on the record it possesses a kind of wistful pathos. The best record Miss Doris Vane ever made was her first, when she sang *Orpheus with his Lute* for Vocalion. Since then her songs and her singing of them deteriorate every month. I'm not well acquainted with the wireless programmes, but I suspect Miss Doris Vane of being a success in that medium. I suggest that she might find it worth while to ask herself if the gramophone audience is not superior? It is sad to hear her wasting her sweetness on a desert air. The best newcomer to the Columbia list is Mr. Seamus O'Doherty, whose singing of *Kitty of Coleraine* and *The Rose of Tralee* is perfectly delightful. Mr. O'Doherty's record is some compensation for two dreadful inflictions in the same bulletin by Mr. Monty Woolf. These will go into the albums that contain records stopped in mid-career. "A new singer," says the bulletin, "with an infectious style." This is serious. All the other Columbia artists should be vaccinated at once. If Dame Clara Butt caught this style, even Mr. Justice Eve might allow heavy damages.

The shamelessness of dance composers is astonishing. After the success of *Valencia* we get in one month *Sevilla*, *Matador*, *Picador*, *Barcelona*, and no doubt we shall have next month *Banderillo*, *Bobadilla*,* *Burgos*, *Cordova*, *Cadiz*, *Malaga*, and *Valladolid*, and every one of them *Valencia* with a slight difference; and in every case that slight difference spoiling it.

Much the best "funny" record was of Gilbert Childs in *The Rich Man Drives By*. And it really is funny. Funny records are hard to come by for the gramophone, and Columbia has always managed to produce the best. With this the lead is well maintained. For some time now I have been taking breath as it were before committing myself to an opinion of the latest musical comedies. Every month I hope that a set of records will come along which will explain why these musical comedies have a success. But they never arrive. The tunes,

*Bobadilla appears as if by magic in the Aco and Vocalion June bulletins.—London Ed.

the words, the singing, all seem to me just as dull as they can be. I take a strong cocktail and say, "well, now, it's a wet and windy afternoon, let's go through these musical comedies." And then we do. And the rain pours down and the wind howls, and I have a second and much stronger cocktail, adding curaçoa or absinthe as the case may be. And the rain pours down harder than ever, and the wind howls more fiercely, and I am reminded of the famous old nautical yarn which begins, "it was a dark and stormy night, and the captain said to the mate, 'Spin us a yarn,' and the mate began as follows, 'It was a dark and stormy night and the captain said to the mate, 'Spin us a yarn,' and the mate began as follows, 'It was,''" and so on ad infinitum. "So this is the life of pleasure," I say to myself gloomily when the last record has wound its weary way into silence. Dusk is falling by now. The wind and rain are worse than ever. I take a third cocktail, adding both curaçoa and absinthe this time and doubling the amount. I realize that I am middle-aged. I read one of Miss Evelyn Laye's articles in the *Daily Sketch* about renovating old powder-puffs, and I ask for one of her records to be put on again. "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?" I ask as a pleasant ladylike little voice murmuring pleasant ladylike little words creeps out of my gramophone. Will some kind correspondent send me a philtre from which I may drink, and after I have drunk, enjoy these musical comedies. Some super-Kruschen is what I require "with beaded bubbles winking at the brim and purple-stained mouth." Why should I be denied the ability to enjoy these productions? I love Felix the Cat. One of the minor horrors of the general strike was my suspense over Wilfred's recovery from his accident. American humour is not entirely outside the dimensions of my smile. I follow with devotion *The Bringing up of Father*. The above examples are testimonies to my ability to enjoy what the majority enjoys. So why am I denied admission to the Venusberg of musical comedy? If, when next I go to London, instead of sitting up half the night gossiping at a night-club I take a course of ice-cream sodas at Lyons' Corner House, will that bring me into closer touch with modernity? If I take a course of Mrs. Marie Stopes, will that help me to regain my lost youth? "Give me back, give me back the wild freshness of morning!" If I took up golf, should I be able to enjoy *Betty in Mayfair* better? If I got one of those electric belts I read of in advertisements, should I be enraptured by *The Blue Kitten*? I appeal to Miss Peggy O'Neil who wrote me once such a charming open letter about dressing-rooms that echo nowadays to the strains of Holst. In my young days dressing-rooms echoed to the strains of the latest songs from musical comedies. Can it possibly be

that even the contemporary dressing-room is depressed by the intolerable monotony of its own musical comedy?

I find myself in danger of devoting my review of records to arguments with various—I hardly like to say colleagues, for I suppose that a *franc tireur* should hardly call himself a colleague of *la Garde*—with various, shall I say, demigods of music. Feste, in the *Musical Times*, is not quite fair to me in his comments on my defence of *Traviata*, because he left out the qualification of my remark about arteries. "I am assuming that the listener has not been accustomed to think of life in terms of music. Such a one would obviously be justified in rejecting *Traviata*." And I added "all opera." I do think that opera requires to be judged by something more than the merely musical standpoint. An opera is as much a challenge to drama as to music. Feste doubts my contention that *Traviata* appeals to an audience, but goes on to say that even if it were frequently performed, that fact would not prove its merit, since the *Bohemian Girl* and the *Lily of Killarney* draw steadily in the provinces. It is an illusion that provincial taste is inferior to metropolitan taste. I will back any audience north of Nottingham against any London audience. *She Stoops to Conquer* would play a quarter of an hour longer in Bradford than at the Haymarket, because the Bradford audience would enjoy it that much more. Provincial taste is, of course, more conservative, and much less easily impressed by mere novelty. But let us leave the provinces out of it in discussing *Traviata*. Only a fortnight ago I had a letter from Milan. "Last night I went to *Traviata* at La Scala, Muzio singing Violetta. I had never realised how good it could be. Of course, Toscanini loves it and was marvellous. The house was absolutely packed and the enthusiasm tremendous." Now, really, I protest that one cannot dispose of a Milanese opera audience as merely provincial. It is likely that in Latin countries *Traviata* will hold audiences for many years to come; I can perfectly understand why the music of it should revolt people of musical taste and education; but there is a vitality which refuses to be quenched by good taste, and of such vitality the public only is the judge. It is the vitality of *Traviata* that I wish to defend. Feste deprecates "the views of amateurs whose set of values has been arrived at hastily after a few years of casual concert-going or gramophone orgies," and, of course, he is perfectly right. But I think if he really has paid me the compliment of reading my monthly "outpourings," he must admit that I have never attempted to claim a great deal for the value of my opinion, and if music is ever to share with literature and painting the interest of the average man, it would be useful if "critics who have lived with music all their

working lives," would assume a less esoteric attitude to an average man like myself, who happens to be able to express the views of other average men with more sincerity than discretion. Why do publishers expect to sell more copies of a book about poetry by a literary critic than a book about music by a musical critic? Presumably because the average reader is not so likely to be driven off as a profane intruder. The hieratic attitude so often taken up by musical critics would not be tolerated from a literary critic. I sympathize with the exasperation that ill-considered and immature judgments by people like myself must cause, but that very exasperation drives a critic like Feste into being thoroughly human and thoroughly interesting when he bothers to reply to us. We gain a great deal thereby, and the critic loses nothing—except sometimes, as in the case of Mr. Newman, his temper.

I have received an interesting letter from somebody to whose opinions I pay much attention, in which he tells me that I was too precipitate last month in ruling out the small sound-box as a reproducer of the new recording. Perhaps I had better make perfectly clear just exactly where I do stand *at the moment*. Please observe the italics. The last thing I want anybody to suppose is that I have come to any final conclusion. At the risk of boring people I will recapitulate somewhat, and here and there go into more detail. You will remember that by the end of last summer I had reached the conclusion that the combination of a Balmain machine, a Vitz sound-box, a Petmecky needle, and a Lifebelt achieved the best reproduction obtainable. Had the new Orchorsol sound-box appeared then, I should have been hard put to choose between it and the Vitz-cum-Lifebelt. Then came the new recording and simultaneously with the new recording the new H.M.V. instrument. At first the new records—in future, for the sake of clarity, I shall call them the electric records—were too few to enable me to judge fairly, but my first impression was that, whereas with old records my combination was still slightly superior to the H.M.V., with electric records there was not much in it. Then the electric records began to increase rapidly, and at the same time to improve. My combination received its first blow when it definitely failed to negotiate the *Parsifal* records. By this I mean that it failed as a horse fails at a hurdle, and the little more was in the extra loud string passages of the bass. Three or four correspondents wrote, about this time, saying that they had failed in the same way, although they were not using my particular combination. Not merely, however, did the "mechanics" go wrong, but the reproduction itself was more unpleasant than was necessary. However, I was still without enough good electric

vocals to make up my mind whether it was the recording that was wrong or my combination. Presently, however, I collected enough sopranos—I chose sopranos because it was on old soprano records that the new H.M.V. had seemed least successful—to make some comparisons. In every case the No. 4 sound-box beat the others, and when I obtained a second No. 4 sound-box, which I used on the Balmain, I was satisfied that whatever experiments might be made upon it at present the No. 4 was the best for the electric recording. Last week I had as visitor a great enthusiast with a very fine ear, who is president of one of the northern gramophone societies. Now, he had never heard much of the new H.M.V. and he had never heard anything of the Balmain. Nor had he heard any of the new recordings, having been away from home for several months and deprived of his gramophone. This is important to note, because it meant that his ear was completely unfatigued. I put him where he could not see which instrument I was using, and, in fact, I did not tell him that I was changing. I played him four records—Elsie Suddaby singing *Nymphs and Shepherds*, Backhaus playing *Liebestraum*, the new *Journey to the Rhine*, and the trio from *Lombardi*, sung by Caruso, Alda, and Journet. In each of the first three records he found the H.M.V. machine definitely much the better, but in the trio he found the Balmain (using an Orchorsol sound-box) just as definitely much the better. I did not express any opinion until his was given, and in every case my opinion coincided with his. The critics of the new H.M.V. complain of its cavernous effect. Yet I find mine the most open machine I have ever used. When I first used it I said that I thought it was inclined to falsify tenors and sopranos. So it did, and so it still does on old records; but on electric records it reproduces them more realistically than any other instrument. Since then I have tried once more every sound-box I have on the H.M.V. machine, and in every case the result with electric recordings has been inferior to the No. 4. I am perfectly willing to retract what I said about small sound-boxes as soon as a small sound-box comes along to convince me that I am wrong. Indeed, I have such confidence in the author of the important communication I have received that I retract what I said already, and accept at once what he tells me about the cause of my failure with them until now. But as we stand at present my remarks must stand too. There is no small sound-box in my collection here which will give the best results with electric records. I will go further, and say that I find it hard to believe that any sound-box will be produced that will give equally good results with old records and electric records. My criticism of the new Orchorsol sound-box is a case in point. Let me repeat what I said

last month. For old records it is magnificent, but the Orchorsol people took an immense amount of trouble to secure that result. It is not their fault that just before their sound-box, after a most laudable display of patience, was put on the market, the electric records appeared. I sympathize with them, but I have no doubt whatever that if they will give as much attention to the creation of a sound-box—not necessarily a large sound-box, we now learn—that will cope with the electric records, they will solve the problem. Moreover, the trouble they have taken to produce the new Orchorsol sound-box will not be wasted. It will be a very long time before electric records form the majority in any collection, and until a sound-box is invented that is superior to theirs, both on old records and electric records, no gramophile who cares for what is best will hesitate to add their latest sound-box to his equipment.

The London Editor is most insistent that I should give a list of best records for April and May. I should prefer to put it this way :

What I would buy if I were buying one :—

ORCHESTRAL RECORD.

H.M.V., D.1080. *Siegfried's Journey to the Rhine*, Albert Coates, 6s. 6d., 12in.

CHAMBER MUSIC.

(Only complete works recommended.)

Col. L.1731, 1732. *Sonata in C sharp minor* (von Dohnanyi), Lionel Tertis and William Murdoch, 13s., 12in.

PIANOFORTE.

H.M.V., D.1065. *Scherzo, Op. 31* (Chopin), Benno Moiseivitch, 6s. 6d., 12in.

VIOLIN.

Voc. K.05226. *Scènes de la Czarda* (Hubay) and *Concerto in A minor* (Vivaldi-Nachéz), 1st movement, Adela Fachiri, 4s. 6d., 12in.

VIOLONCELLO.

H.M.V., D.A.776. *Le Cygne* (Saint-Saëns) and *Moment Musical* (Schubert), Pablo Casals, 6s., 10in.

A superb record.

OPERATIC TRIO.

Parlo. E.10432. *Rhine Maidens' Song*, 4s. 6d., 12in.

I forgot to mention this, but if any of my readers have been waiting for it as long as I have, they will not wait much longer to secure it. Very good.

SOPRANO.

Parlo. E.10425. *Morgen* (Strauss), Emmy Bettendorf, 4s. 6d., 12in.

I enjoyed this so much, including the illegitimate orchestral accompaniment, that I cannot help recommending it as the best soprano, in spite of the fifth part of *Macbeth* being on the other side ; but if readers want a double soprano, I suggest

Col. D.1543. *D'Amor sull'ali rosee* and *Tacea la notte* (Trovatore), Bianca Scacciati, 4s. 6d., 10in.

CONTRALTO.

Aco. G.15937. *The Hazel Tree* (Schumann) and *Cradle Song* (Brahms), Elsie Francis-Fisher, 2s. 6d., 10in.

TENOR.

Col. 3923. *The Rose of Tralee* (Glover) and *Kitty of Coleraine* (Old Irish Air), Seamus O'Doherty, 3s., 10in.

BARITONE.

Voc. X.9744. *Freebooter Songs*, 1 and 2 (William Wallace), Roy Henderson, 3s., 10in.

There are no bass records I specially recommend, so I will suggest the other *Freebooter Songs*, Voc. X.9745.

CHORAL.

Col. 9085. *Don Cossacks Choir*, 4s. 6d., 12in.

ORGAN.

H.M.V., E.415. *The Question* (Wolstenholme) and *The Answer* (Wolstenholme), Reginald Goss-Custard, 4s. 6d., 10in.

LIGHT RECORD.

Col. 3902. *The Rich Man Drives by*, Gilbert Childs, 3s., 10in.

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WAGNER

By PETER LATHAM

I.—Aesthetics and Orchestration

WAGNER himself never wished to be regarded as a composer pure and simple. He protested with some justice that his achievement covered many fields, and that any estimate of it must be based on a general survey and not merely on the music that constituted but one element in the complex whole. Even the modern opera-goer (and the opera-singer, too) is far too apt to forget all other considerations in his anxiety to appreciate to the full the music that the composer puts before him; and if this tendency is common to-day, it was almost universal when Wagner lived and wrote. For though the obvious truth that an opera is a combination of music and drama has never been entirely forgotten since it was first stated by the group of Florentines among whom this form of art originated, yet the ideal blend of the two has not proved easy to discover. Music has always had a way of asserting her pre-eminence at the expense of the plays with which she has been associated, in spite of all the efforts of theorists and reformers to keep her within legitimate bounds. Even the redoubtable Gluck himself could not always resist her imperious demand for freedom to develop unrestrained along her own lines, and during the seventy-five years or so that elapsed between *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *The Rhinegold* she succeeded in reducing the sister art to a condition of almost complete subjection. Mozart and Beethoven, it is true, never failed to give due consideration to the significance of the scene they were setting, but the bent of their minds towards purely instrumental compositions made them ill-fitted to continue the work of Gluck, even if the sheer splendour of their genius had not been such as to overwhelm by its very magnificence the dramas to which it lent its lustre. Their deep sense of artistic fitness did, indeed, lead to the creation of an operatic tradition that was to develop through Weber till at last it bore rich fruit in the work of Wagner himself. But before this consummation could be reached a period had to be traversed during which the original ideals of dramatic music seemed to be obliterated in a flood of lyric eloquence and vocal virtuosity. This is not the place for an estimate of the operas of Spontini, Meyerbeer, Auber, Donizetti, Bellini, and a host of others, all famous in their day and not by any means forgotten even now; but it will be generally conceded that in their work it was the music and the singers that mattered. The very inanity of so many of their *libretti* is

sufficient evidence of the small store they set on dramatic considerations.

Such being the operas to which audiences were accustomed when Wagner appeared upon the scene, it is not surprising that he should have decided that his theories required some explanation if they were to prove acceptable to the operatic public. His hearers, he felt, must be made to see that his mature work, however novel it might appear, contained nothing that was not perfectly logical and easily intelligible once the standpoint from which he regarded the artistic problem was properly appreciated, and consequently we find him in his writings insisting again and again on the essential unity of the true "Music-Drama," in which literature, acting, and stagecraft should all play their part with the music in achieving the desired dramatic result.

These views, so contrary to current conventions, were regarded by the older school of composers and critics at first with indifference, and later, as Wagner's genius became more and more widely recognised, with growing anger and alarm. Not only was a resuscitation of the inconvenient ideals of Gluck likely to interfere with the style of opera to which they had grown accustomed, but it soon became clear that Wagner intended to push his case further than Gluck had ever dreamed of. He possessed, moreover, a power of clear reasoning, a quick eye for his opponent's weaknesses, and a trenchant pen that rendered him a formidable adversary, and, above all, he was liable at any moment to produce a masterpiece of his own more compelling than a thousand arguments. Finally, he wove into his operas a mass of philosophic doctrine and questionable sociology that was enough in itself to raise in arms against him all but the most progressive elements in contemporary thought.

This was the origin of the great Wagnerian controversy, the echoes of which have not even now quite died away. Besides the difficult problems of opera it included, as has been shown, many things whose only connexion with the principal issue was that they had been dragged into the arena by Wagner himself, and it was further complicated by the discussion that arose concerning the relative merits of "absolute music" and "programme music," the supporters of poetic music (as "programme music" has sometimes been called) enrolling themselves under the standard of Wagner and Liszt, while the purists found a somewhat

reluctant and self-effacing champion in Brahms. There was, as will be seen, plenty to write about if all these large questions were to be thoroughly threshed out, and if any one of the controversialists found himself temporarily at a loss for weapons, Wagner's private life furnished a fresh and almost inexhaustible arsenal. No wonder the fight was bitter! No wonder the Wagnerian literature is voluminous!

Over these weighty matters the dispute among the critics still rages. But meanwhile the much-enduring public has quietly made up its mind. Wagner's reforms may indeed mark a turning-point in operatic history, his *libretti* may be less silly (though more tedious) than those of most opera-writers, but the public cares little for all this. One thing, however, it has seen and felt for itself, the supreme greatness of Wagner's music, and having established this to its own satisfaction it leaves the critics to their own concerns and goes on filling Covent Garden and the Queen's Hall whenever it has a chance of hearing this music performed. When it can it plays over the scores of the operas for itself at home, and when it can't it buys gramophone records. This last point clinches the argument: every element of Wagner's work is lost on the record except the music—even the words are seldom clear—and yet the companies have found it worth while to issue more of the work of Wagner than of any other serious composer whatever. The public may be wrong, though I am not at all prepared to admit that it is, but it has delivered a definite verdict which it would be mere folly for us to ignore.

One of the curious results of the present situation is that while it is in Wagner's music that most of us are interested, yet it is far from easy to gather information about this vital aspect of his work from the mass of the Wagner literature. The best writers have been so engrossed in controversy that their dealings with the music itself have been too often confined to a few desultory references, brought in where they may serve to further the general argument. What we need is a book in English that will be mainly concerned with Wagner the composer, showing us wherein his greatness lies and what is the relationship between his work and that of other nineteenth century writers. It should not be impossible to produce a readable little volume on these lines, which would appeal to the ordinary music lover by steering safely between the Scylla of æsthetic theorising and the Charybdis of excessive technicality.* Meanwhile, in the absence of more adequate information, perhaps

these stray remarks may be of interest. They lay no claim to originality and there must be many readers of THE GRAMOPHONE to whom everything I have to say has long been familiar. But it is not to them that I address myself so much as to those others who, having felt the spell of this mighty music, would be glad to learn the sources of its inspiration and what use its creator made of them. No one need fear that such an enquiry will destroy the magic of *Tristan* or *The Mastersingers*. Every critic knows that there is an inmost shrine of genius to which he can never penetrate; it is outside this that his business lies, and he is content to stop short upon the threshold, leaving the ultimate secrets still "wrapt in mystery."

The outstanding feature of all Wagner's later works, and in a lesser degree of his earlier ones, is the importance of the orchestra. From being merely a suitable background against which the brilliance of the "star" singer may shine more brightly the sound of the instruments has become a bottomless ocean of music in which singer and audience alike must swim or, on occasions, sink. The large force of players that he employs is, of course, partly responsible for this result, but other composers might have used the means without achieving the effect, whereas Wagner can obtain all his characteristic richness even with the diminutive band of the *Siegfried Idyll*. The real secret of his orchestration is his unique appreciation of the possibilities for colour inherent in the instruments at his disposal, and it was this that guided him both in his selection of new recruits for the orchestral family and in his treatment of its established members. The well-known division of that family into strings, wood-wind, and brass, with percussion as required, he inherited from the great classical symphonists; such changes as he made were in the direction of splitting up these groups still further. Everyone remembers the famous passage at the beginning of the prelude to *Lohengrin*, where the ethereal quality of the music is due to its being played on violins only, these being divided up into four, five, or even eight parts instead of the customary two. This elaborate writing for the strings is no isolated instance (the music accompanying the wood-bird's song, *Hei! Siegfried erschlug nun der schlimmen Zwerg!* from the forest scene in *Siegfried* supplies another example) but is typical of Wagner's methods.

When, however, he came to the wood-wind, where each part in the score is played by a single instrument instead of a group, he found it impossible to proceed in the same way without adding to the number of players; for the two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, and two bassoons, with which Beethoven was usually content were clearly insufficient to produce the subtle shades of colour that he loved. So we see him adding a third flute (or a

* Possibly such a book as I describe is already in existence. If so, I should be grateful if some reader would introduce me to it. Mr. Ernest Newman's recently reprinted *Wagner as man and artist* contains a long section that is very much to the point, but we cannot get this portion separately from the rest of the book—and it is not a cheap one!

piccolo) to the flute group, a third oboe (or a tenor oboe, *cor anglais*) to the oboes, a third clarinet (or bass clarinet), and a third bassoon (or double bassoon). This enabled him to obtain three-part harmony in any of the four principal wood-wind *timbres* and is in a large measure responsible for the rich sonority of his passages for full orchestra, besides accounting for the mellow smoothness that characterises his writing for wood-wind alone.

But it is in the brass that we notice the most conspicuous advance. Not only does Wagner pursue the same plan here as in the wood-wind, using four (or more) horns regularly, three trumpets, and reinforcing the three trombones with a bass tuba, but he is able, owing to improvements in the mechanism of some of these instruments, to treat them with far greater freedom than had been possible hitherto. Mozart, Beethoven, and even Weber, when writing for horns or trumpets, had been compelled to confine themselves to a mere handful of notes since the "natural horns" and "natural trumpets" that their players used were only capable of producing the series of sounds that we call, for obvious reasons, the "bugle notes," and a very few others. This cruel limitation prevented their allotting any but the simplest themes to these instruments (and it must be remembered that Mozart and Beethoven seldom used the more versatile trombones), it forced them if they wished to carry their music into some remote key to "leave their horns and trumpets behind them," and generally it relegated the brass to a subordinate position in the background that was quite unworthy of its dignity, besides occasioning some clumsy writing that a later generation unaware of the difficulty has sometimes been too ready to condemn. During the nineteenth century, however, instrument makers set themselves to remove this reproach to their profession, and they succeeded in evolving the valve horn and valve trumpet on which it was possible to produce almost any note that was within the instrument's compass.† Wagner was, perhaps, the first to realise the full potentialities of this invention, and his free and effective use of it sounded the death-knell of the older instruments. For the Wagnerian brass no key is impossible, no note inaccessible, and the group takes its rightful place as an equal beside the wood-wind and the strings.

Certain other obvious peculiarities of Wagner's orchestration are of less importance. In *Rienzi* we find him writing a part for the serpent, an old wooden instrument that will remind some of us of Thomas Hardy's "Under the Greenwood Tree." "It is now happily obsolete," as Mr. Corder observes. In the score of *The Ring*, again, various

strange and forbidding brass instruments are to be met with, a bass trumpet, a double bass trombone and the like; I am told that H.M.V. have used the full complement of these for their splendid *Ring* series of records, but I cannot claim much acquaintance with them in the opera-house or the concert-hall, where their parts are taken as a rule by the ordinary trombones and tuba. For the tuba, by the way, Wagner shows a marked partiality, and in *The Ring* he employs four of these instruments, often using them antiphonally with his trombones. The effect is a fine one, but I have not come across any convincing illustrations of it on the gramophone.

Very different from these brazen-throated monsters is the harp, for which Wagner writes regularly though by no means always well. Perhaps the most famous example of its use is in the "rainbow bridge" music from *The Rhinegold*, where the diverse and simultaneous *arpeggi* of six harps and divided strings are employed with the happiest result. This, however, is exceptional, and on the whole harpists have a right to reproach Wagner for his lack of consideration for them. There is, for instance, in the *Liebestod*, a full and elaborate part for the instrument which is most of it inaudible, the weak sound of the harp being submerged beneath the orchestral flood‡—it must be heart-breaking work for the player! But even so he will probably prefer it to that apparently simple and effective passage in the *Fire-music* from *The Valkyrie* where the descending chromatic *arpeggi* are so appallingly awkward that no one to this day has ever been able to render them quite satisfactorily.

But the harp is a solitary exception; for all the other instruments Wagner shows an imaginative sympathy that has seldom if ever been equalled. Needless to say he makes unheard of demands on all his orchestral players—there are things for the strings in *Tristan* that tax to the uttermost even the largest and most accomplished body of violinists—but most great composers have found themselves transcending the technical limitations of their executant brethren at one point or another, and unless the feats required of them have been utterly unreasonable the executants have made it their business to find a way of translating the written notes into tone. Richard Wagner was certainly not the man to be more considerate than others in this respect, and his scores would have been beyond the reach of the orchestras that sufficed for Beethoven, and even Weber, as much by the difficulty and complexity of the individual parts and the subtlety of the relations between them as by the prodigious

† In England the slide trumpet, which employs a different device to overcome the same difficulty, has been preferred to the valve instrument. But we use the valve horn.

‡ Note.—There are records of the *Liebestod* in which the harp can be heard quite clearly almost throughout; but this prominence has always been achieved at the expense of other instruments which have been either omitted or unduly suppressed. In the theatre one catches little or none of the harp part until close to the end.

number of players that was required to perform them. The only proper place to discuss fully this aspect of the subject would be on a book on orchestration, but no technical knowledge is needed to appreciate the general truth of what I have just said or the splendid way in which orchestras and their conductors have strained every nerve that their presentation of Wagner's music may come as close as possible to his original conception of it. All honour to them !

And all honour to the recording companies, who have had their own problem to solve—a problem of which Wagner can never have dreamed. I am very ignorant of the history of the gramophone and its

rude parent, the early phonograph, and it would be interesting to know whether the master could possibly have heard any instrument of this kind before he died, in February, 1883. But be that as it may, he can never have anticipated the enormous vogue his music would one day acquire by such unexpected means, and he certainly made no allowances for the difficulties of reproduction. Considering the enormously complex nature of the work that had to be done by the recording companies, the results already achieved are nothing less than astounding ; and—most satisfactory of all—they show no signs of resting upon their laurels !

PETER LATHAM.



“FAIRY GOLD”

By THE LONDON EDITOR

IT is a little disconcerting to receive a copy of the Editor's new novel from Messrs. Cassell “for favour of review.” But it would be far more disconcerting if one had any hesitation about recommending “Fairy Gold” whole-heartedly. By this time all readers of *THE GRAMOPHONE* have probably read it, or have got it on their library lists ; neither the strike nor any professional criticisms (I have seen none so far) will deter them ; and what seems to me to be the best all-round novel that Compton Mackenzie has given us since “Sinister Street” is sure of appreciation wherever the art of the story-teller and the art of the poet are still appreciated.

But if one of our readers only knew the Editor's work through his articles in this magazine, he might expect the novels that come from the same pen to be of the same calibre, or even to be the diversions of a man whose main occupation in life was the editing of a paper about gramophones. He might be totally unaware of the position which Compton Mackenzie has won for himself in the highest ranks of fiction.

As a novelist he stands among the “best sellers” of the present day. His invention, his craftsmanship and his style have appealed consistently to a very wide public. This does not mean very much. But he stands out as being among the best educated, most widely read and most cultured of the writers of the present day. In him one recognises the significance of the phrase “the humanities.” He has the equipment which the public should expect of a great novelist. That is why he suffers from the gingerly sneers of certain

critics who shoot upwards from a lower intellectual level. This has always happened throughout the history of literature.

Compton Mackenzie founded a flourishing type of the modern novel with “Sinister Street” ; he is an adventurer as every creative artist must be, but not an adventurer as any charlatan may be. He owes little to his immediate predecessors, to Anthony Hope, Stevenson, Meredith, Hardy, Disraeli, but is much more in the tradition of Dickens and Thackeray, of Balzac and Stendhal, of Smollett and Defoe.

As a craftsman he is indefatigable. Few writers, and far fewer novelists, of the day take such pains over their work. He ransacks a library for the details of a paragraph, and is meticulously correct in those subjects where others flounder—in astronomy, botany, heraldry, naval lore, psychology, biology, entomology and etymology. And yet in all his wide reading he has extracted no fact for use in his novels without adding to it some fancy or imagination of his own to crystallise or enhance it.

As a stylist he is almost unrivalled ; the deftness of his dialogue and the beauty of his descriptions are imperishable while the English language is valued. It is enough to say that Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, in his Oxford anthology of English prose, has included among the quotations from all the great masters of the language only one living writer under forty-five—Compton Mackenzie.

We of *THE GRAMOPHONE*, may legitimately take a vicarious pride in this signal distinction.

THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

Opera at Covent Garden: The Weber Centenary

MOST of us are anxious, I fancy, to forget as soon as possible the terrible inconveniences that were inflicted upon us by the General Strike. I will make no attempt, therefore, to depict the difficulties of transport that had to be overcome during the opening week of the Royal Opera season. Fortunately for the London Opera Syndicate, the house had been sold out in advance, and the audiences—those who did not possess cars—managed for the first three nights as best they could, while lorries were provided by the directors to convey the chorus, orchestra, and the whole of the stage workers to and from the theatre. I need not say how thankful they all were when things became normal once more. It was wonderful, under the circumstances, that there should have been such a brilliant gathering as there was for the initial representation of the season on Monday, May 10th, when Mozart's *Figaro's Hochzeit* was given—for the first time in German, if I am not mistaken, at this house.

As my readers must by now be aware, I am of opinion that *Le Nozze di Figaro* is heard to greatest advantage with the Italian text to which it was composed. That opinion did not undergo modification at any moment of the performance under notice; on the contrary, it was confirmed by the impression of ponderousness that prevailed generally in the diction of the singers even at their most fluent. One could, of course, perceive the reason why the opera, if it was to be given at all, must be sung in German this time. Only the German artists were there to do it at the outset of the season; and the Italian, when they did arrive, would have quite enough to do with preparing, rehearsing, and singing *Don Giovanni*. But this would not justify me in attempting for a moment to compare the performance with those given here by the Italians in bygone years. It was no better in some respects than the best of those given under Sir Thomas Beecham, though I am glad to be able to add that the *tempi* adopted by Bruno Walter were much more sane and correct; they did not ruin every quick movement in a reckless endeavour to take things faster than they had ever been taken before. Also I noted with pleasure that the absurdly exaggerated hoops and crinolines of the Beecham period had disappeared, or very nearly so; and now there only remains to dispense with his fanciful *décor*, consisting of angular apartments quite

unsuitable for this opera, especially Susanna's, which opens at the back to a wide staircase with an exposed doorway accessible to everybody, as well as to Cherubino and the Count. This, of course, spoilt the comedy of the scene.

And now as to the singing. I derived both interest and satisfaction from listening to the *viva voce* rendering of the music by artists whose gramophone work I have so often been called upon of late to judge in these self-same airs. It makes a difference, certainly; but not precisely in a vocal sense. What we get with the theatre, as I have said before, is the atmosphere of movement and gesture, of facial expression and living drama. Otherwise I am not prepared to say that Mmes. Lotte Lehmann, Elisabeth Schumann, and Delia Reinhardt gave the music of the Countess, Susanna, and Cherubino respectively with any greater charm of voice or art than we can discover in their records. They sang well—the first two even beautifully—and that should suffice. Better actresses than these it would be hard to find. The fact that the opera was given without cuts involved rather too much "dry" recitative and also the restoration of the small part of Barberina, which was sung in sprightly fashion by Katherine Arkandy.

But I cannot quite admit that Richard Mayr was the right choice for the part of Figaro. Splendid and versatile artist as he is, the ideal Baron Ochs of *Der Rosenkavalier* may not essentially be able to delineate for us the immortal Sevillian barber of Beaumarchais. His lightness and humour are not of that calibre; for between the two types, the Viennese and the Spanish presented by these two characters, there is a wide gulf fixed; and Richard Mayr cannot span it. Nor does the music of Figaro altogether suit him, though he sings it glibly enough. Allowing that it was written for a low and not a high baritone, my experience is that it ought never to be attempted by a *basso cantante*, which is precisely what the Count Almaviva of *Le Nozze* ought to be and what Josef Degler was not. Thus we had a Figaro whose voice was too heavy and a Count whose voice was too light; and yet, for physical and histrionic reasons, it would not have done for them to have changed places. The Basilio of Albert Reiss and the Bartolo of Norman Allin were both familiar and excellent, and it was good to see the English bass in this company.

I heard first-rate accounts of the *Meistersinger* performance, but could not attend it myself, nor can I say anything about the earlier sections of the *Ring*. I can, though, speak from personal knowledge of the truly magnificent way in which *Tristan und Isolde* was given on Thursday, the 13th ult. No such rendering of Wagner's masterpiece has been heard at Covent Garden within recent recollection, and I doubt whether the parts of the two protagonists have been so supremely well sung as they were in this instance by Frida Leider and Rudolf Laubenthal, since Jean de Reszke and Lillian Nordica sang them here first in 1896. It is so rare to hear those glorious duets in the first and second acts sung perfectly in tune by voices well-matched and well-balanced, with refinement and delicacy, in addition to passion that rose occasionally to the highest climaxes of abandonment and power. At moments like these Frida Leider's voice never loses an iota of its pure musical timbre, thanks to her perfect breath-control. The admirable capacity for reserve that one notices in her records was put in evidence here by the delicate gradations of strength with which she managed her crescendos, while never ceasing, meanwhile, to realise the exact meaning of the dramatic situation. Altogether I consider her the greatest Isolde on the stage to-day.

Laubenthal, without being an equally great Tristan, is undoubtedly a good actor, and he expresses the tremendous emotions of passion aroused by a love-philtre, not alone with sincerity and force, but with a voice that is of sweet quality and as steady as a rock. Imagine, therefore, the joy of listening to a Tristan and an Isolde neither of whose voices "wobbled"; a Brangäne with tones so rich and method so irreproachable as those of Maria Olczewska; a König Marke so dignified and pathetic as Richard Mayr; a Kurwenal of merit who can sing and act as impressively as Herbert Janssen; safe artists in the minor rôles; and a clever conductor like Robert Heger, with a fine orchestra to follow his beat—imagine an ensemble such as this, and you have some idea of the reasons that have provoked me to unwonted enthusiasm over this memorable *Tristan* performance.

Of the *Ring* performances I can speak here only of the third, which took place on Monday, May 17th. If I can call any section of the tetralogy my favourite I think it is *Siegfried*, but, truth to tell, I can give it but a shade of preference over *Die Walküre*, which I may mention was the first to become known and popular on the Continent prior to the production of the complete series of music dramas at Bayreuth in 1876. In the present *reprise* at Covent Garden, the parts of Siegmund and Siegfried were assumed, in accordance with Wagner's intention, by the same singer. The father and son, thus embodied, give

colour to the idea that one has grown up the image of the other, and that some twenty years have elapsed since Brünnhilde was put to sleep by Wotan, when the moment comes for her to be awakened by Siegfried's kiss. The disobedient Valkyrie does not apparently recognise Siegfried at once, since her first salutation is addressed to the sun and the light—"Heil dir Sonne, heil dir Licht"—and not to the youth who has aroused her from her trance. But a little later she emphatically congratulates herself upon the fact that it is Siegfried, who has successfully defied the flames surrounding her couch and thus become entitled to possess her. It is, perhaps, worth mentioning that Laubenthal, and not Melchior, was the Siegfried in *Götterdämmerung* a night or two later. But that fact does not weaken my argument, nor did the change trouble Brünnhilde in any way.

It was the marvellous climax of the story that provided the musical and dramatic triumph for Gertrude Kappel, and also in a slightly lesser degree for Laurentz Melchior, in *Siegfried*. Both sang magnificently, and, had the tenor attained the same heights of poetic charm and nobility of expression as his fair companion, it would have been a case of honours divided. As it was, he proved himself a satisfying representative of the fearless hero—alert, sympathetic, spirited, and vocally competent—without creating the profound impression that I can recall in some of his predecessors. As for Gertrude Kappel's Brünnhilde, I take it to be about the finest, on the whole, now before the public. She has all the traditions, her gestures and acting are superb, and there are the tones of joy and tragedy alike in her pure, vibrant voice, so that she can call upon either at will, just as Rosa Sucher and Ternina could. The music of Wotan the Wanderer received no more than justice at the hands of Emil Schipper; beyond that, in point of dignity and distinction, he failed to go. At the stormy moments his voice was not under perfect control, and when suavity (not tenderness, mind, as in the *Abschied*) was required he became prosaic and dull. Nor could he always fill the house above the din of the brass in Bruno Walter's powerful orchestra, which, however, very properly allowed the disappointed Wanderer to fend for himself in the duet with Erda, whilst diminishing its force to a real *pianissimo* whenever Olczewska's lovely notes had to be in the foreground.

The masterful Mime of Albert Reiss has not altered a jot in the thirty years that it has been known to habitués of Covent Garden. It is as clever, as subtle, as humorous and unforced in its comedy as ever. Habich's Alberich is not less meritorious than his Beckmesser, and that is saying much. This artist's enunciation is so clear that he gives you every syllable distinctly; and, despite the megaphone, Fafner the dragon enjoys a similar

privilege, thanks to Otto Helgers. I wish I could say the same of the representative of the Forest-bird, but, as she sounded extremely nervous, it may be that she will be heard to better advantage another time. The conducting of Bruno Walter displayed an amazingly intimate knowledge of the score. He has it not only by heart, but he obtains an unfailing realization of Wagner's ideas and therein proves himself a worthy successor to Hans Richter, Anton Seidl, Gustav Mahler, and Arthur Nikisch. Can I say more?

Of the return of Chaliapine and his first appearances in London as Mefistofele and Don Basilio I shall perforce have to defer notice until next month. I witnessed his début in Boito's opera at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in 1908, and his incomparably fine impersonation appeared to me to excel in grandeur even the conception of the Italian Master.

THE WEBER CENTENARY.

A hundred years ago this month since Carl Maria von Weber died at 91, Great Portland Street! It seems strange now for me to remember that his favourite pupil, Sir Julius Benedict, was my intimate friend; that when I was a youth in my 'teens I used to sit with Sir Julius in the drawing-room of his house in Manchester Square, and chat with him about his master's operas and the difficulties under which they had been composed. His love and admiration for Weber were unbounded. He, Julius Benedict, whose hand had trembled when it shook that of Beethoven, who had accompanied Jenny Lind on her tours in England and America; who had met nearly every great musician of the nineteenth century, was wont to declare that the composer of *Der Freischütz* was the greatest genius he had ever encountered. The true founder of German opera, all who had come after him, Wagner included, owed him an enormous and incalculable debt. Had there been no Weber, the entire history of German lyric art after *Fidelio* would have been different to what it was.

In the light of this fact (for it is more than a mere opinion) it is interesting to recall that Weber's fellow-student under the Abbé Vogler at Darmstadt was no other than Giacomo Meyerbeer. The two young men were close friends, but strongly-contrasted types, and we know well to what a singular degree their respective talents pointed in different directions. Nevertheless, I do not agree that, because Weber adopted the highest art-models, Meyerbeer must naturally have pandered to lower tastes and so departed from the true canons of his art. Why, Weber himself drew the line at Beethoven, whose ideas and his own, he felt sure, were too far apart ever to meet. He acknowledged Beethoven's power, but would only accept his

early works; the later ones, he wrote, "are to me a bewildering chaos, an obscure straining after novelty, lit up, it is true, by divine flashes of genius, which only serve to show how great he might be if he would but curb his riotous imagination." Weber was mistaken, of course, and even his faithful disciple, Sir Julius Benedict, admitted to me that he had lived long enough to perceive this. On the other hand, he would contend that Weber was a more original, a more resourceful composer of romantic opera than Beethoven, and as great an inventor and master of the romantic style as Wagner, whose development of the music-drama could be largely traced to Weber's influence. And now I myself have lived long enough to see that Benedict was perfectly right.

Then if that be so, the reader may ask, why are Weber's operas not more popular in this country—the land that he loved to visit, where he died and lay buried (in Moorfields) for eighteen years, and for which he wrote his last opera, *Oberon*? Frankly, I do not know exactly how to answer this question. It is many, many years since I heard *Oberon* in London with Tietjens and Trebelli in the cast; it must be a long while (never mind the dates!) since I witnessed a revival of *Euryanthe* by the pupils of the Royal College of Music; and I can quite understand what a terrible obstacle the libretto of the second, if not also the first, of these operas must present to the modern point of view. One deals too much with spirits of air, earth, and water; the other is too utterly stupid. Yet there is music in both that is undeniably and irresistibly beautiful. But what is there to complain of in *Der Freischütz*? Is the story too childish, the form too Mozartian, the spirit too purely German? If so, why do we welcome *Hänsel und Gretel*, why do we cherish the delicious absurdities of the *Magic Flute*, and why do we revel in the mediæval Nurembergities of *Die Meistersinger*? I make no comparisons between Weber and Mozart or Weber and Wagner; and I leave Humperdinck out of the question. But I do assert that *Der Freischütz* is one of the operatic masterpieces of all time; a score scintillating with gems "of purest ray serene," rich in captivating melody, replete with sublime expression and the most deftly-woven patterns of orchestral texture. We used formerly to hear it here in Italian and English, and though it naturally sounds best in German, I would like nothing better than a fair test for *Der Freischütz* by reviving it at Covent Garden in English, with good singers, a first-rate conductor, and an up-to-date *décor* by Max Reinhardt or his British equivalent—if we have such a thing.

For the gramophile I am afraid that Weber does not yield a very bounteous harvest. It consists principally of records of numbers from *Der Freischütz* made in Germany and sung by German

artists. The noble air known in the English version as *Softly sighs* and in the original as *Leise, leise*, has provided the Polydor with material for two complete discs; one by Marcella Roesler (65692), the other by Lilly Hafgren-Dinkela (65608). Of these the first-named is a good average rendering, nothing more; but the second reveals a big tone of satisfying quality, a genuine dramatic soprano that does ample justice to a worthy task. Two incomplete excerpts, giving only Agatha's Prayer—the opening portion of this air—are sung by Delia Reinhardt (72787) and Claire Dux (72889); only I consider it a great pity that artists of their calibre should have restricted their efforts to the *Gebet*, with its preceding recitative, *Wie nahte mir der Schlummer*. On the reverse side Delia Reinhardt at least sticks to the same opera with a charming delivery of Agatha's second air, *Und ob die Wolke sie verhülle*; while Claire Dux offers her admirers a little contrast in the shape of *The sun whose rays are all ablaze*, from *The Mikado*! But here somehow neither cloud nor sunshine seems to fit the case quite accurately. Lotte Lehmann, on the other hand, leaves the big air out altogether, and sings *Und ob die Wolke* (72916) with all her finished art and purity of expression—a tribute which I can pay almost in equal measure to Hüni-Miasek (65637), who displays a lovely soprano timbre and tender feeling. The accompaniments generally are fair.

With her remarkable opulence and natural beauty of tone, Florence Austral makes a record of *Softly sighs* (H.M.V., D.775) that is effective rather than grand or striking. Her reading of certain passages is not accurate; of others it is lacking in signs of careful study. The *allegro* part needs more brilliancy and life, and unfortunately half of it has had to be omitted for want of room. (As will have been seen, the German artists would not think of cutting this air.) I advise Miss Austral to make another record and give the whole thing complete on two sides of the disc. She can then

also make sure of correcting the faults that disfigure this effort, including the "fading away" and breathlessness of the final coda.

From Polydor likewise I have the sparkling duet, *Schelm! halt' fest*, with which the second act is opened by Agatha and Aennchen. As sung by Birgitt Engell and Elisabeth van Endert (14391, 10in.) it has no great distinction but plenty of brightness and "go," while the two voices blend nicely, despite their rather dull timbre. Years ago the two favourite airs in *Der Freischütz* were

Rudolf's tenor solo, *Through the forest*, and the drinking-song for Caspar, which everybody could whistle or hum. The former is splendidly recorded by Tudor Davies (H.M.V., D.932); the latter is done with characteristic vigour by Richard Mayr (*Hier im ird'schen Jammertal*, Pol., 62389), who gives all three verses on a 10in. disc. Apart from these items I may mention an admirable performance of the famous overture by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Henri Verbrugghen (Bruns. 50055), on two sides, 12in.

While *Euryanthe* foreshadows *Lohengrin*, it is interesting to note that *Oberon* was the romantic source wherefrom sprang conspicuous passages in Schumann (*Paradise and the Peri*), Mendelssohn (*Midsummer Night's Dream*), and Wagner (*Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*).

Weber was practically a dying man when he was setting Planché's English libretto to music of the most original and glorious kind. The opera was produced at Covent Garden in April, 1826, and he died in the following June. Its neglect in this country is for every reason indefensible; for, say what one may about the inanities of the book, I think our opera-loving public would imitate their forbears and ignore that, for the sake of music so exquisitely beautiful and fascinating.

The glorious overture, which for just a century has been a feature of every classical instrumental repertoire, has been finely recorded for the H.M.V. by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra and the Cold-



JERITZA as SIEGLINDE

stream Guards Band (D.154 and C.115); by the New Queen's Hall Orchestra under Sir Henry Wood (Col. L.1677), a very fine performance on two sides of a 12in. disc; by the band of the 1st Life Guards (Voc. K.05051); also in a shortened version by the Sutherland Orchestra (Beltona, 489). Then there is that magnificent soprano air, *Ocean, thou mighty monster! Ocean, du Ungeheuer!*, worthily recorded by two Polydor artists, viz., Frida Leider (65625) and Helene Wildmann (72804). Both are exceptionally good, but the former especially so for its splendour of tonal and dramatic treatment, the recording and accompaniment being also highly praiseworthy. Moreover Mme. Leider lays me under a personal obligation by proving here that I am right and all the other German singers wrong when they ignore the *appoggiatura* and treat Weber literally, as if he were Bach or Palestrina.

She sings this air exactly as Tietjens used to, and a closer adherence to the composer's intentions it is impossible for me to conceive. At the same time I must confess that I like hearing the big airs from *Oberon* sung to the original text, and for this reason, if for no other, I would draw special attention to the excellent rendering of Elsa Stralia (Col. 7328), wherein voice and text alike come out with clearness and effect. Finally, the long and trying tenor solo, *O 'tis a glorious sight* (H.M.V. D.932) receives ample justice from Tudor Davies, albeit minus the concluding passage, which in this instance can fairly be dispensed with. Few singers, probably, could lend equal dramatic power and robust spirit to this piece, and in saying so much I intentionally pay the Welsh artist a high compliment.

HERMAN KLEIN.



CHILDREN'S RECORDS

(Communicated.)

There are few children's records of good quality. Most of them, especially those of American origin, are either coarse in conception, faulty in intonation, or badly recorded. There seems to be an impression abroad that anything is good enough for the children. The best records are undoubtedly those of Roger Quilter's *Children's Overture*. This has been recorded by the New Queen's Hall Light Orchestra, both for H.M.V. (D.47, 6s. 6d.) and Columbia (L.1471-2, 6s. 6d. each). Of the two versions the Columbia is the more complete and is better recorded. The reverse of L.1472 contains two delightful extracts from *Where the Rainbow Ends*.

The following records issued by Columbia can also be recommended. All are 10in., sold at 3s. each:—

2992.—*Cinderella*: "Uncle Rex" of the B.B.C.

2995.—*Sir Roger de Coverley, Highland Fling, and Sailor's Hornpipe*: London Dance Orchestra.

3178-9.—*Little Songs for Little Voices*: Harold Williams.

3331 and 3501.—*Nursery Rhymes Medley*: Century Quartette.

Mr. Belloc's *Cautionary Tales* are excellently done by Harold Williams on 3224-5-6, though whether it is quite proper to call them "Children's Records" is open to some doubt.

[Another correspondent suggests H.M.V., B.1283, 1284, 1285, *Tales of the Fairy Dustman*: Marjorie Montefiore and Walter Glynn.—Ed.]

THE FORUM COMPETITION

In accordance with the votes of readers, the first prize (five pounds) is awarded to Lieut.-Col. G. O. TURNBULL, D.S.O., for his article "From First to Last" in the March number; the second and third prizes are divided between ERNEST BROOKS ("Feeding Music to the Young Composer," February) and "SCRUTATOR" ("Two Libraries: Books—Records," May), who received equal votes and will receive Two Pounds and Ten Shillings each. "D.M.G." was next on the list with his "A Plea for more Handel" (March); while Philip Marchant's "Some Notes on Puccini's *La Bohème*" (May). A. M. Gordon-Brown's "Marcel Journet" (February), Arthur W. Gayton's "De Groot" (February), and "Indicator's" "Why we are Musical" (May) were evidently much appreciated. But, as one voter expressed it, "What a task for the Editor to set one—to limit to three articles only! One hates to leave out 'Indicator' and anything so amusing (and useful, since it makes one want the *Mikado* opera) as 'Virgin Soil' by H. A. Course." We are all grateful to all the contributors who have helped to make *The Forum* so varied and interesting.

No voter got the correct list. Three gave two of the prizewinners; and since J. C. HORRELL, The Maples, Raunds, gave "A Plea for more Handel" as his third choice, he receives records of the value of one pound.

We hope to start *The Forum* again in the July number. The conditions of entry may be found in the May number, page 562.

The Perfect Gramophone Recital

By LEONARD FLEMMING

I HAVE so often read in THE GRAMOPHONE about gramophone recitals, and tests, and concerts—so often read about the really good, the indifferent, and the bad performances of various machines and records, that I feel sure it will interest readers to know just how—and where—in my opinion, the really perfect gramophone recital can be heard.

The one great disadvantage at present is that it costs a lot of money, and even Mr. Mackenzie, who, I think, must be very rich, would find that to hear this recital regularly might, in time, become a severe drain upon his financial resources—and perhaps his physical endurance too.

But who knows, one day THE GRAMOPHONE may have a circulation of a million or so copies, and why should he not then hear this perfect recital? Here, then, I extend my invitation to him, and a very sincere wish that he may one day avail himself of it. Now, if you take the train up from Capetown and travel north for about 800 miles, and then change into another train and travel east for 60 miles, and then change into a cart or a wagon and go north-east for an hour on a dry and dusty road, you will arrive eventually in the heart of the backveld.

Here I have spent my life, quite alone, and in complete silence, trying to build up a farm; here I landed a good many years ago in the middle of a bare, barren, waste of nothing, stretching away to an illimitable, tremendous nowhere.

Here is a silence that is stupendous, a silence in which, standing outside the house at night, I can hear the ticking of the small clock on the mantel-piece inside, can hear the wheels of my returning wagon ten miles and more down the distant road, can hear the movement of a small insect in the grass close to where I may be sitting, and where, in that wonderful hour before the dawn, when it seems as though the whole world were holding its breath waiting for the first rustle of the dawn wind, I hear the greatest sound of all, the overwhelming sound of silence.

In that I have lived my life.

In the middle of this vast silent sweep of veld stands my house, built after many years of hard work. It is covered with rose-creepers; a broad verandah runs round three sides of it, a rose garden on one side, and to right and left some 20 yards beyond, hundreds of beautiful trees, pines and eucalyptus, 50 feet and more in height. There is a small pool of water hidden by a tall privet hedge, and by turning on a windmill a quarter of

a mile from the house the water runs over rough stones in to the pool and gives me a wonderfully life-like effect of a babbling brook.

Those are some of the "props."

There are, however, one or two other necessities and conditions for this great recital.

It must be a summer night with a full moon. I have had a long week's work with cattle and sheep and crops and natives, and during the whole of that week I have not heard my own language or seen a white face.

On this particular afternoon the native post-boy has brought the parcel of specially chosen records, and although they have been opened and dusted and put in order, I have not yet played one of them—I prefer to wait until I can play them under the most ideal conditions.

My instrument is a R. H. Morris "Melophone." I have heard many different instruments and I know nothing better than this. On this full moon night it stands amongst some tall rose bushes 10 yards from my verandah, completely hidden; and I have placed it so that the sounds will come through several branches of leaves and flowers.

I have bathed, dressed, had dinner; and I take my cigarettes and records out on to the verandah. Complete silence around me, the scent of roses, and a purple heaven studded with brilliant stars. For the entire day I have been longing and looking forward to this moment, and now, there is an exquisite sense of delicious excitement flooding one's whole being.

I put on the first of the *Pathétique Symphony* records, and a night of magic, and beauty, has begun for me.

Here is no machine-made music. Whatever there may be of mechanism over there at the instrument, whatever there may be in the way of scratch, seems somehow to be lost in the enormous space around. One hears only this lovely orchestra coming straight to one, out of the starry night. And as the symphony continues, there are passages that set all my body athrill with a great joy. Here is a state of mind and being, a contentment and happiness that can rarely be surpassed, and when, later, glorious voices sing for one right out of the heart of the roses with amazing clearness and purity; when, in real, natural surroundings, I hear real human beings, real instruments, real orchestras, I know that I have heard the most perfect gramophone recital in the world.

LEONARD FLEMMING.

ARMCHAIR PHONATICS

By P. WILSON

XIV.—Record Wear: Summary

MY previous articles on record wear have been based partly on general principles and partly on experiments conducted with old recordings. The new electrical records present additional problems of their own about which I am not yet able to speak with complete confidence. But it is at least clear that the conditions which were important for the old records are doubly important for the new. It will therefore be convenient at this stage to summarise the conclusions hitherto arrived at.

There are two kinds of record wear: the one frictional, due to the mere rubbing of the needle on the record, and the other impulsive, due to the difficulty which the needle experiences in following a serrated groove. Of the two the latter is usually the more important, though the former reacts upon it. Anything, such as a carefully adjusted Lifebelt, which assists the needle to track properly, saves impulsive record wear. Moreover, wear of this kind invariably implies faulty reproduction. The following are its chief causes:

(1) A stiffly tensioned sound-box, whether in the diaphragm, the stylus or the springing.

(2) A sound-box which is out of balance with the amplifier. This is usually evidenced by a shrill tone or by a dull and backward tone.

(3) A combination which has a very pronounced resonance peak within the musical range. When a note of that frequency is produced by the record, the machine wants to go on vibrating to it long after the needle has left it. The sign of this is blasting on the same note whenever it occurs. A blast of this kind may also be imprinted on the record by the recording apparatus, but in that case it will be at the same place at all speeds. If the reproducer is at fault an alteration of speed shifts the blast from one place to another. Fortunately, this cause of wear is not very common.

(4) Bad needle-track alignment. The axis about which the stylus rocks should be at right angles, or nearly so, to the line joining the needle point, at any part of the record, to the centre of the turntable spindle. Otherwise the needle will not lie evenly in the groove and will have more difficulty in following the serrations on one side than on the other.

(5) A machine which is not level. In that case the needle will always press against one side of the groove. To test and correct this use the method explained in the issue for March, 1925.

(6) Stiffness of the tone-arm laterally or vertically. The record groove has to do work to overcome this. A slight spring pressure *on to* the record may be an

advantage since it keeps the needle down to its work.

(7) Too great a weight on the record, which may cause the needle to stick in the groove and may make the motor jerky. On the other hand, a very light weight is just as bad, since it causes the needle to jump about and chatter in the groove. A spring weight-lifter may have the same effect. The best weight varies with the sound-box and record and can only be found by trial.

(8) An unsteady motor, and warped or dirty records. All these tend to jerk the needle.

(9) A needle with a faulty point. The needle should rest on the bottom of the groove and not on the walls. If it does the latter it will wear into a chisel and, therefore, cut the record more easily. The needle should not completely fill the groove at the beginning (no steel needle does). If the needle material is harder than the record it had better be much harder, though not very brittle. It is then much more likely to have a good point and will not wear into a chisel so easily. It should, however, be noted that the type (weight, flexibility and length) of needle affects the balance of the sound-box (see (2) above). So that a needle which is suitable for one sound-box may not be suitable for another. The difference is most marked between steel needles and fibres. A sound-box tuned for the one is rarely suitable for the other.

(10) Impulsive record wear can only be caused by a needle which is harder than the record material. A fibre or Xylopin will break down first. Apart, therefore, from the point noted at the end of (9), the frequent breaking of a fibre or Xylopin is a symptom that something is wrong with machine or record. Another symptom is the clogging of the record groove even with needles that are not very soft, greasy or sticky. I dealt with an exceptional form of this last month. The more usual form is for the record to get clogged at the heavy passages where the groove is most squiggly. The trouble is very prevalent with some of the more recent electrical recordings. I have found that, although I can play through any of them with a fibre needle for about a dozen times, the record then gets clogged and fibre needles will no longer stand up. Fortunately, the treatment which I described last month promises to overcome this difficulty. I find, too, that it saves wear with steel needles. Next month I hope to be able to give full details of the best procedure.

P. WILSON.

NEGLECTED COMPOSERS

By W. A. CHISLETT

II.—Selim Palmgren

ONE of the most cultured of modern musicians, and one whose culture never becomes pedantic, is Selim Palmgren, who ranks very high in the modern nationalist Finnish School of Composers. Born in Pori on February 16th, 1878, he studied at Helsingfors Conservatorium from 1895 to 1899 and later in Germany and Italy under Anserge, Berger and Ferruccio Busoni. On returning to Finland he was elected conductor of the Finnish Students Choral Society and in 1909 received the appointment of Director of Music at Abo. He soon found that more and more of his time was being occupied in composition, and in 1912 resigned these appointments with the object of devoting himself entirely to original work varied by an occasional concert tour, for he was at this time a pianist of some fame. During the war period of 1914–1918 Palmgren lived and worked mostly in Copenhagen, and in 1920 visited America for the first time, where he was eventually persuaded to settle, being appointed in 1923 to the Chair of Composition at the Eastman Institute in Rochester, New York.

Although his works include two operas (only one of which has been produced), several orchestral suites and piano concertos, and numerous songs and male voice choruses, his best works are the shorter piano pieces in which the soul of a lyric poet is revealed. Palmgren is essentially a miniaturist, and these impressionistic studies display a quality of harmonic invention and a fastidiousness of taste comparable to that of Chopin.

The most obvious feature in much of this music is the national note, many of the themes being actually based on the Folk Music of his country, while others are equally national in spirit, though they are purely the invention of his own brain. Such music are the two suites *Finnish Rhythms* and *Finnish Lyrics*. Palmgren, however, is not the slave of the national tradition of his school and has produced much fine music, very varied in its interest, which is characteristic of nothing but his own many-sided personality, and in which he shows an intimate knowledge of the technical and harmonic possibilities of the piano. Thus in *War*, the modern war of machines and terrible in its grim inevitability, there is a rich sonority, the possibility of which from the piano has been realised by very few composers. To see that this is intended to be no mere exhibition of technical virtuosity, but rather an anxiety to find the most

appropriate form to express his thoughts, we have only to compare it with the beautiful serenity and simplicity of such pieces as *Evening Whispers*, perhaps the best known of all his music, and *Spring's Arrival*, one of the *Finnish Lyrics*. The meticulous care with which all his works are finished is perhaps best illustrated by *The Dragon Fly*, a whimsically conceived phantasy treated in a manner as delicate as the creature itself, and comparable in its appeal to Debussy's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*. In complete contrast to these are *The Sea*, an angry and desolate picture, and the *Dance on a Place of Execution*, a grotesque parody. Sadness is still the keynote in *The Swan*, a curiously beautiful portrayal of the old legend that this bird never sings until overtaken by death; and also in *Les adieux*, which takes us through the whole range of grief, beginning with quiet sorrow, rising to a paroxysm of despair worthy of comparison with Siegfried's *Funeral March* from *Götterdämmerung*, and ending on a note of tearless resignation.

Palmgren frequently used traditional and classical forms, but does not hesitate to defy convention when necessary for the attainment of his object, as, for example, in the *Bird Song*, in which both bar lines and key signature are dispensed with in the desire to obtain absolute freedom of expression. In spite of this, and of his modernity of colour and harmony, he is in complete sympathy with the old masters, as can be seen by anyone who studies the score of the piano transcription of the *Minuet in D* from Mozart's *Divertimento No. 17*. The same community of spirit is apparent in many other pieces, and while it is impossible to say yet what ultimate position in musical history he will occupy, because his music is permeated by the true spirit without which immortal music cannot be created, Selim Palmgren is a name that will live.

Many of these works are ideal for gramophone purposes, because they are short enough to be recorded complete on one side of a record, but so far as I can trace, the following is a complete list of those available at present: H.M.V., D.58, *The Sea* and *The Bird Song*; B.1722, *Evening Whispers* and *Mozart's Minuet*; D.588, *Finlandish Dance*; B.1911, *Finnish Rhythms*, Nos. 1, 2 and 4. V.F., 1138, *The Sea*. Col., D.1471, *Romance* and H.M.V., B2291, *Rococo*, are arrangements for the violin and 'cello respectively.

W. A. CHISLETT.

THE NEW VOLUME

THE General Strike was so arranged as to interfere as little as possible with our publishing dates, and only very few of our readers were deprived of their May numbers. But this first number of our Fourth Volume has necessarily been produced in circumstances of trade difficulties and general surmise which must claim the indulgence of our readers, especially of those newer readers who are not yet acclimatized to the unorthodox methods by which this magazine is conducted. Records for review have been held up by the strike, and in order that justice may be done to them we have made no effort to delay publication on their account. They will be dealt with next month. On this occasion we must forego two or three of the accustomed "features" and rely upon the coloured portrait of Wagner and the first of a series of articles upon Wagner records to compensate for their omission.

Our Advertisers

The gramophone industry has been severely checked by the strike, and the undeserved blow to prosperity, coupled with uncertainty as to conditions in the immediate future, is reflected in the diminished number of advertisements in this number. We cannot complain; all must be prepared to shoulder a fair part of the burden laid on the whole community by the strikers. But this, at least, we should like to make clear to our readers and to the trade. The more advertisements we get for THE GRAMOPHONE the better service we can render to the public. No amount of increase in circulation can make up for loss of advertisement revenue. This is a truism. We, and all our readers, are indebted to those of our friends in the trade who have not curtailed or cancelled their advertisements this month. But there is one definite way in which everyone can help to restore and to improve the situation. We can honestly say that no gramophone-user need look outside the advertisement pages of THE GRAMOPHONE for any single thing that she or he wishes to buy in the way of records, machines, or accessories. It should therefore be a point of principle with every one of our readers not to spend a penny on any record or needle or sound-box or spring or machine which is not manufactured or sold by one of the advertisers in THE GRAMOPHONE. Probably this principle is already widely recognised or unconsciously practised; but it may be still more deliberately and rigorously observed in order that during the coming months our advertisers may reap an increasing benefit, our

own position may be strengthened, and as a corollary the amount and the interest of the reading-matter in THE GRAMOPHONE may be improved.

The Index

The Index to Vol. III. is nearly ready. That it is essential as a reference guide to the last twelve numbers goes without saying; and very few of our readers have good enough memories to enable them to dispense with it. The compilers and revisers of it have been confronted with some knotty problems, since it has been demonstrably impossible to include many hundreds of references which *might* be the object of the reader's search. Taking a broad view of what may reasonably be considered the objects of the user, they have throughout avoided references to articles which can be easily traced by looking through the contents on the outside cover of each number; they have omitted the majority of single references, unless these were very important; and they have cut down to a minimum the references to individual records. These last can be found under the names of their composers or operas or other group headings.

In spite of the immense pains that have been taken to winnow the chaff from the wheat, many of the omissions will be deprecated, no doubt; but in the end it must be agreed that an enormous amount of valuable information has been compressed into a modest compass. The price is 2s.

Suggestions for Binding

Most of our readers keep the current numbers in one or two of the red spring-back binding cases. This is certainly the best and simplest way of doing it; and perhaps the simplest, certainly the cheapest, way to preserve them is to go on buying new binders as they are required. But, permanently stored in this way, there is a bulkiness which disquiets the ordinary mind; and special black and gold cloth binding cases are prepared (price 4s. from the London Office) for those readers who wish to have Vol. III. bound like its predecessors. Some wish to keep advertisements, some prefer the covers bound in at the end. Some merely want the untidy things bound as sensibly as possible; and for such people the following note to the binder may be useful.

1. Index.
2. Supplements in the order: Mozart (coloured), Mozart aged 7, Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Rachmaninoff, Pachmann, Mörike, Hempel.
3. June. Omit pp. ii-xi, xii, xiii, xiv-xvii, xviii, xix, xxiii, 50, xxiv, 51, xxv, 52, xxvi-xxviii.

4. July. Omit pp. ii-xi, xii, xiii, xiv-xvii, xviii, xix, xxiii, 103, xxiv, 104, xxv, 105, xxvi-xxix.
5. August. Omit same advt. pp. as July and pp. 155, 156, 157.
6. September. Omit same advt. pp. as July and pp. 203, 204, 205.
7. October. Omit same advt. pp. as July and pp. 251, 252, 253.
8. November. Omit pp. ii-xi, xii, xiii, xiv-xxi, xxiv, xxv, xxxi-xl.
9. December. Omit pp. ii-xi, xii, xiii, xiv-xxi, xxii-xxv (gum in), xxvi, xxvii, 346, xxxiii, 347, xxxiv-xl.
10. January. Omit ii-ix (gum in), x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv-xvii, xviii, xix, xxv, xxvi, 397, xxix, 398, xxx.
11. February. Omit ii-ix, x, xi, xii-xv, xvi, xvii, xxiii, 450, xxiv-xxix.
12. March. Omit ii-vii, x, xi, xii-xv, xvi, xvii, xxii, 497, xxiii-xxvi, (also perhaps viii, ix, 495, 496).
13. April. Omit ii-ix, x, xi, xii-xv, xvi, xvii, xxiii, 541, xxiv, 542, xxv-xxviii.
14. May. Omit ii-vii, viii-xi, xii-xv, xvi-xix, xxiv, 587, xxv-xxviii.
15. Covers in order.

This is not entirely satisfactory, even if Translations and Following the Score pages are pasted into albums with their corresponding records. But nothing of real importance is jettisoned, and a possible volume is the result of dispensing with 320 pages. Even so, it contains nearly 600.



COMPETITIONS

New Competition

We reckon that we know the handwriting and, to a certain extent, the tastes of about one in every twenty readers of THE GRAMOPHONE! So far as is practicable we have tried to satisfy the desires of the majority of that one-twentieth of our public! But what of the others? They read the paper, or at least they buy it. Do they like it? What attracts them in it, what bores them, what exasperates them?

Can we persuade these silent readers, just for once in a way, to help us with their advice?

We offer *Three Pounds' Worth of Records* (winner's choice) for the best letter of comment on THE GRAMOPHONE and of suggestions for its improvement, and four prizes of *Fifteen Shillings' Worth of Records* each for the four next best letters. The only condition (apart from the rules below) is that each competitor shall truthfully begin his letter: "I have never written to the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE before." (Business communications, such as subscription forms or orders for Lifebelts, etc., do not disqualify.)

Competitors must conform to these rules:—

- (1) Write only on one side of the paper.
- (2) Give full name and address, whether for publication or not.
- (3) Mark your letter clearly "June Competition."
- (4) Do not, on any account, exceed 500 words.
- (5) Address your letter to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1, and post it so as to arrive not later than Monday, July 5th.

The Editor's decision must be accepted as final.

Result of Competition A

(March; see Vol. III., page 558).

The prize of Three Pounds' Worth of Records (winner's choice) is awarded to R. C. Scully, 11, Grove Mansions, Stoke Newington, for his list (Nos. 13 to 18 in the last number, p. 558), since no information of a previous recording of any of his pieces has reached us up to date.

Besides the lists of W. O. Gofton, G. Williamson and H. J. Bloom given last month, excellent suggestions were also sent in by the following competitors in particular: H. McClay, S. Harford, H. Kerslake, T. Lavy, J. O. Lomasney, J. R. H. Morland and A. Rosebottom.

Of the nineteen titles given in the last number four have been recorded, but in all cases but one the records are now withdrawn from the catalogues: (4) *The Rope Dancer*, Marjorie Hayward (H.M.V.); (5) *Dragonflies*, Daisy Kennedy (Col.); (7) *Zephyr* (not *Bephir*!), Szigeti and Beckwith; (10) *Dancing Doll* (*Poupée Valsante*), Maud Powell (H.M.V.), but this is still available played by Marjorie Hayward on Zono. G.043, and on H.M.V. B.2289 which was only issued last month. For this information we are indebted to H. L. Broad, D. W. Churchill, H. F. V. Little, and Lt.-Col. G. O. Turnbull.

A further list of violin pieces recommended by readers:—

- (20) *Serenade* (Jeral); (21) *Cubana* (Arbos); (22) *Cavatina* (Carl Bohm); (23) *Saltarello* (Leone Sinigaglia); (24) *Chanson d'amour* (Theodore Holland); (25) *La Contentazza* (Paolo Felis); (26) *Elegie* (Ernst); (27) *Reverie* (Simonetti); (28) *Soeur Monique* (Couperin-Burmester); (29) *Impressions du Soir* (Henri Stiehl); (30) *Will o' the Wisp* (Besley); (31) *Harlequin* (Granom-Moffat); (32) *Spanischer Tanz* (Rehfeld).

TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

Dealers, Note!

We are now in a position to supply Lifebelts, Weight Adjusters, and Wilson Protractors to dealers, if it is more convenient for our readers to get them through their local gramophone shop, and we hope that dealers with a large clientele will keep them in stock in future.

N.T.A.

The first edition of Wilson Protractors is now exhausted and a second has been issued. This is a great improvement on the first, being easier to use and containing far more intelligible directions. The demand for this, as well as for the Lifebelt and the Weight Adjuster (H.M.V. models only), has been very large lately. In the next number we hope to announce a weight-adjuster for Columbia models too.

The Illustration

As the paragraph in these columns last month about the Waveola seems to have mystified some of our readers, we reproduce here a photograph of what we used to call an Academy Amplifier, but which is now sold as a "Phonos" at 30s. (it is an Italian invention), as it should be fitted to a motor and turntable. The Waveola can be fitted externally in exactly the same way. The simplicity of the arrangement for those who have spare soap-boxes, but not mahogany inlaid cabinets, can be imagined; though, in this connexion, the merits of the Sonatab, designed by Captain Barnett, and on view at the London Office, should not be overlooked by amateurs.

The Everplay Needle

The "Everplay" has reappeared on the market, and is sold by the Everplay Co., 3, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1, with a week's trial and a £20 guarantee that the needle will not scratch records. It costs 5s. post free. In March, 1924, Captain Barnett reported on it (Vol. I., p. 211)—"a fine wire, intended to wear away continually, is fed through a needle-like socket. . . . It will play from ten to twenty records between each 'feed.' The result of a day's work shows that it wears a record less than medium tone needles of ordinary steel." A reader, "R. J." (Vol. II., p. 50), described some fairly exhaustive tests, and declared—"Of the Everplay needle I can say confidently and unreservedly that it wears the record less than any 'once-only' steel needle that I have ever tried." He added a warning that it must be used with care, and the instructions given with it must be closely followed.

Congratulations

The Editor's wonder whether his original supporters were still enthusiastic at the end of our third volume was solved by the number of very cheering letters received from our most constant readers; too many to be thanked except thus, collectively. One of them, our friend and indefatigable prize-winner, "Scrutator," wrote from the heart of the strike in Lancashire to express his appreciation, and added that he had postponed ordering a Lifebelt for fear that the information should reach the "Strike News" editor of the local press and produce a sensation—"Important Official of Large Colliery Orders a Lifebelt!"

Favourites at Covent Garden

A portrait of Jeritza as Sieglinde in the *Valkyrie* appears on another page, and she is also appearing in *Thais*, *Jewels of the Madonna*, and *Tosca*. Other famous H.M.V. singers are Chaliapine (*Mefistofele* and *Barber of Seville*), Journet (*Thais* and *Barber of Seville*), and Annseau. Records of Capsir (*Barber of Seville*) and of Elizabeth Schumann (*Figaro*, *Meistersinger* and *Don Giovanni*) are also promised by H.M.V.

Columbia is also well represented by Bruno Walter and Percy Pitt as conductors, and by Charles Hackett, Norman Allin and Badini, as well as the two newcomers of the May bulletin, Scacciati and Merli. There are also rumours of Stabile records, which will be welcome.

Many of the other singers are only to be found in the Polydor catalogue. But when is Covent Garden going to let us hear Emmy Heckmann-Bettendorf? Parlophone should see to this, or we shall have to send a petition from our readers to the Directors of Covent Garden next season. Melchior (Parlophone) is playing Siegmund and the young Siegfried in *The Ring* cycle. Luigi Cilla (Imperial), Constance Willis and Enid Cruickshank (Vocalion), and Fanny Heldy (Pathé) are other singers in the list of artists engaged.



Linguaphone Repeater

Just as we go to press comes an amended form of the Linguaphone Repeater which was reviewed by the Expert Committee in March. It is very gratifying for the Committee when suggestions for improvements are accepted by manufacturers and acted upon; it proves that the Committee is really and constructively useful to the trade.

More Handel

To judge from correspondence, a good many readers ought to find their way to the Crystal Palace for the Triennial Handel Festival on June 5th, 8th, 10th and 12th. Tuesday the 8th, at 6.30 p.m., is perhaps the most attractive prospect of all, when choruses, arias, and instrumental numbers from Handel's operatic works will be given—Admeto, Ezio, Tamerlano, Rodelinda, Rinaldo, Deidamia, Sosarme, Alessandro, Berenice, Rodrigo, Lotario and Atalanta (what a string of sonorous titles!)—followed by a miscellaneous programme that will include one of the Organ Concertos. "Take the good the gods provide thee."

The Federation

The Federation of British Music Industries is the poorer by the loss of Captain J. G. G. Noble, M.C., from its staff. He has made many friends during his six years' connexion with Federation work who will join with us in wishing him all good things in the fresh fields to which he goes.

Linguaphone Records

Several readers have not been slow, after reading the paragraph on this subject last month, to write, offering to undertake a foreign language, *pro bono publico*, if we will get the necessary records from the *Linguaphone Institute*. But isn't this—as the monkey said when he mistook a chile for a pear-drop—rather hot?

The Ball Room

Dancers and followers of Richard Herbert in his Dance Notes should also read *The Ball Room*, a monthly illustrated journal dealing with all phases of dancing. It is published about the first of each month, at 6d., and contains practical expert information by leading London dance teachers and exponents of the various branches of the art. A specimen copy will be sent to anyone who applies to the Editor, 32, Fumival Street, E.C. 4, mentioning THE GRAMOPHONE, and enclosing 2d. to cover postage.

Teddy Brown

Probably the most prominent figure in the dancing world of London is Teddy Brown of the Café de Paris, who plays the xylophone while his band does the rest. He is perfectly wonderful in dexterity, as well as appearance; and when you are told—as you are sure to be told sooner or later—that the Prince of Wales found him and brought him from America, you realise that even on that vast continent it would be hard to land without catching sight of Teddy Brown. And yet both he and his band are quintessentially recorded on Imperial records. Messrs. Keith Prowse, who are among the leaders of fashion in dance records, make rather a feature of them.

The Trout Quintet

The Editor was quite right. In April he offered to give the *Trout Quintet* (Col. L.1698-1702) to the writer of the best essay on "Why I don't like Chamber Music," on condition that the recipient if he still persisted in not liking chamber music, should surrender the records to the first claimant among our readers. "But I wager," he added, "that this quintet doesn't get passed on to anyone else." The winner, as announced last month, was Mr. John H. Locke; and the records were sent to him, while diffident letters were arriving from all parts of the country from readers who wanted the *Trout Quintet*. However, on May 10th, Mr. Locke wrote, "My cry is 'No surrender.' I am a convert. When I arrived home from work on Tuesday, April 27th, my wife's greeting was, 'The quintet came this morning—it's lovely.' I have played it twenty times already, and it is delightful—a serious rival, in fact, to the *Flying Dutchman Overture*. The favourite record is No. 4, Variations Part 2 and the Finale, Part 1. I have bought a record, Col. L.1521, Catterall, Squire and Murdoch. I think the Beethoven side is good enough to convert anyone who does not like chamber music. The quintet converted me."

So that is, approximately, that.

The de Lara Scheme

Support for Mr. de Lara's scheme for a National Opera House seems to have become wider and stronger during the last two months; and, now that it is definitely supported by all three parties in the House of Commons on a non-party basis, real progress is pretty sure to follow. We are still only too glad to receive any subscriptions of any size to the fund, as has been often explained in these columns, and to hold the money in trust until such time as the scheme comes to fulfilment, or until it is abandoned; in the latter case all moneys will be returned to the senders.

Sonata Recital

Spencer Dyke and Harold Craxton made a strong combination at the Wigmore Hall on May 20th, when they played a very attractive programme—Mozart's *Sonata in B flat*, No. 15, Beethoven's *Sonata in G major*, Op. 96, and Fauré's *Sonata in A major*. The N.G.S. must keep an eye on these, as a variant from quartets, quintets, and sextets.

Violin Favourites

Others, besides ourselves, have been considering the question of violin music. A correspondent of the *Musical Courier* for

April 29th, gives the following list of the "ten most beautiful of shorter violin works." *Ave Maria* (Schubert-Wilhelmj), *En Harmonie* (Achron), *On Wings of Song* (Mendelssohn-Achron), *Nocturne*, Op. 27, No. 2 (Chopin-Wilhelmj), *Caprice Viennois* (Kreisler), *Waltz*, Op. 64, No. 2 (Chopin-Huberman), *Nocturne*, Op. 54, No. 4 (Grieg-Elman), *Gypsy Airs* (Sarasate), *Slavonic Dance No. 2* (Dvorák-Kreisler), and *Cortège* (Debussy). Very good; but how few of these were written originally for the violin!

Topical

What is luckier than to draw the winner in a Derby sweep? To own the copyright of what is on the back of *Valencia*.

The Lifebelt in Church

On Easter Day the Lifebelt made its debut in a church, helping to reproduce the singing of selections from *Messiah* by the Sheffield Choir for the congregation of the little eleventh century church of Silvington.

Edith Lorand

It was very bad luck that Miss Lorand's recital at the Aeolian Hall came plump in the middle of the strike, but those who made the necessary effort to go and hear her play, were loud in her praises; and we must all hope that she will come again soon and give us another chance.

Gaelic Records

The Editor, for reasons of his own, is trying to learn the Gaelic language by means of gramophone records and a grammar. By the courtesy of the recording companies he has a good collection of Actuelle, Columbia, and H.M.V. records for this purpose; but doubtless there are others to be gleaned from the catalogues.

New-Poor Records

Those readers who only care for band records will be disgruntled this month. "W. A. C." could not get his reviews done in time. "H. T. B.," on the other hand, was well up to date with his New-Poor Reviews, but in his agitation to be punctual misdirected the envelope, and his article only arrived at the London Office as the last proofs of this number were disappearing into the privacy of production. Our next number will reverberate with martial and bargain-hunting noises.

The Call of the Veld.

It is more than usually interesting to get an article from an overseas reader, who is a novelist of the best-seller class; and lovers of Mr. Leonard Flemming's "Call of the Veld," published in England by Messrs. Hutchinson, will especially appreciate the charm of his "Perfect Gramophone Recital" in this number. To avoid enquiries, let us state at once, that the "Melophone," which he mentions, is a South African gramophone, made at Cape Town, and not yet, as far as we know, on sale in England.

N.G.S Notes

There is no news for members of the National Gramophonic Society this month, except that the issue of the Brahms' *Clarinet Quintet* records has been delayed by the strike.

A considerable number of members have not yet paid the half-yearly subscription due on March 24th. They have been circularised; but until they pay they will not receive the Elgar *Piano Quintet* records nor the Brahms, nor anything else. There may be a good reason for some of the defaulters, but there cannot be for all of them; and it should not be necessary for us to chase round for the instalments due.

All particulars of the Society can be obtained from the Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1.



Gramophone Societies' Reports

[Owing to the increasing number of societies, it is unfortunately necessary to ration reporting secretaries down to 200 words a month. Reports must reach the London Office before the fifteenth of the month for inclusion in the next number. Items from programmes must be incorporated in the report; programmes separately attached cannot be printed.]

NOTTINGHAM.

Will any readers who would be interested in a Nottingham Gramophone Society please communicate with Mr. JOHN H. LOCKE, 6, Dulwich Road, Radford, Nottingham?

AGRICOLA GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—Owing to the industrial dispute the meeting of the society, which would normally have been held on Tuesday, May 11th, was postponed pending a return to normal transport conditions. We hope, however, that it may be possible to hold this meeting later on in the month.—EDWARD U. BROCKWAY, *Hon. Secretary*.

THE BIRMINGHAM GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The April meetings of this society were held at the board room of the Ebenezer Chapel, in Steel-house Lane, on Tuesdays, April 13th and 27th respectively.

The former meeting consisted of a specially arranged classical programme followed by a performance of the complete opera *The Mikado*, by Gilbert and Sullivan. The items particularly liked by members in Part I. included: *Tannhäuser Grand March*, played by Sir Henry Wood's Orchestra (Columbia); Emmy Bettendorf in Mozart's *Porgi amor* (Parlophone); Galli-Curci in *Una voce poco fa* (H.M.V.), this latter record being superb; John Coates in *The Pretty Creature* and *Linden Lea* (Vocalion); the Irmier Choir in Schubert's *Lullaby* (Parlophone); and Berlioz's *Hungarian March* (H.M.V.). One needs hardly to add that *The Mikado* was greatly enjoyed, but, strange as it may seem, members did not care for it quite so much as *Pirates of Penzance*, given in March.

The second meeting was devoted to special demonstration records, kindly sent by Vocalion, Parlophone, and Pathé companies. The Parlophone selection for April was particularly good. Our members greatly enjoyed Emmy Bettendorf in two Verdi arias from *The Masked Ball*, the *Trio* from Wagner's *Rheingold*, sung by three German singers, and a very bright and light little *Indian Suite*, played by Edith Lorand's Orchestra. Strauss's *Tone Poem, Macbeth*, is also a very fine issue. Our members welcome any record by Bettendorf, and, in fact, we might almost be called a Bettendorf Society. Once again hearty thanks to Parlophone. The Vocalion April list contained also some delightful records, which we all enjoyed: Aeolian Orchestra in Chabrier's *Espana Rhapsody*, Henry Baynton in two Shakespeare pieces, Van Lier in two 'cello solos, Life Guards Band in *Nell Gwynne Dances*, and Enid Cruickshank in two arrangements from *Carmen* and a French opera of Debussy. However, the most popular records of the Vocalion batch were a set of two records of Roy Henderson in Wallace's *Freebooter Songs*, and we all voted these records perfect gems. We much appreciate Vocalion's generosity. The evening was rounded off by a selection of Pathé (sapphire) and Actuelle (needle-cut) records, which included the Garde Republicaine Band in *Merrie England* and in *Peer Gynt Suite*, Glyn Eastman in *Grendon Fair*, a *Wildflower* selection, and Hardy Williamson in two *Messiah* arias. Our members were highly interested in all these and seemed to prefer of the two the sapphire-cut records. We again thank Pathé for their kindness.

Only one meeting monthly will be held in summer months, next meeting being June 1st. Any prospective members should write to me at the above address.—CHARLES SUMMERFIELD, *Secretary*.

BLACKBURN AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—On Tuesday evening, May 4th, the above society held its third gramophone recital, some forty-five members being present. The recital took the form of a demonstration of a selection of the May issues of the various recording companies and of a number of records kindly supplied by the Parlophone Company for inclusion in the library. Of the Parlophone records particular mention must be made of *Death and Transfiguration*, played by the Berlin Opera House Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Weissmann, who certainly interpreted most vividly the picture Richard Strauss meant to convey. Mozart's *Menuette* from *Quartet in C* (Parlo. E.10408) was loudly applauded by the audience, whilst Handel's

Concerto for the Violoncello (Parlo. E.10407-8) was finely and clearly rendered by A. Barjanski and orchestra. Of the May issues, Wolstenholme's *Question and Answer*, played by R. Goss-Custard upon the Kingsway Hall grand organ (H.M.V., E.415), received the applause it so thoroughly deserved, whilst the opinion of the society of Siegfried's *Journey to the Rhine* from Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods* (H.M.V., D.1080), played by the Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Albert Coates, was that this record was an example of what an orchestra should be, and sound like. An interesting item of the evening was the announcement of the results of the previous meeting's best record competition, which was divided into two classes—vocal and instrumental. The two prizes (an 8s. 6d. record for each class), presented by the president, Dr. N. M. Greeves, and vice-president, Mr. Frank Critchley, were won by Miss N. Hasney (instrumental) with Schubert's *Ave Maria*, violin solo by J. Heifetz (H.M.V., D.B.283) and by Mr. E. Walsh (vocal) with *Largo al Factotum (Il Barbiere di Siviglia)*, sung by R. Stracciari (Col. 7352). Twenty-nine records were entered and forty-nine members voted. The recital was concluded by the playing of the *Sakuntala Overture* (Parlo. E.10401), which was received with much applause.

The president finally proposed a vote of thanks, seconded by Mr. T. Williams, to the Parlophone Company for their generosity in contributing so graciously to the society's library.—T. C. EGAN, *Hon. Secretary*.

BLACKPOOL GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The programme for March 17th-26th was in the hands of our financial secretary, Mr. Leather, who provided a very interesting evening's entertainment by demonstrating twenty-five items, all the records being of different make, many of them pre-war, but in very good condition, items being: *Maritana Overture* (Beka), *Harlequin's Serenade* (Coliseum), *Rigoletto Quartette* (Cinch), *Questa o quella* (Polyphon), *Masaniello* (Phoenix), *Sweet spirit, hear my prayer* (Pilot), *Capetown Carnival* (Jumbo), *Spirito gentil* (Parlophone), *Tannhäuser* (H.M.V.), *Soldiers' Chorus* (Zono, Cebel), *Jewel Song* (Regal), Air from *Lucia* (Gramophone Concert). Also other items by the Coldstream Guards, Edna Thornton, Radford, and the Metropolitan Dance Band. At the conclusion a very hearty vote of thanks was given to Mr. and Mrs. Leather for their kindness in bringing their machine and records, also for their services that they have so kindly given to the society in the past.—W. GRAINGER, *Recording Secretary*.

BRADFORD AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.—A successful gramophone recital was given on Wednesday, April 14th, at the Church House, by Mr. Mitchell, a member of the committee of the society. Records of note were as follows: *La Svedrô nell'estasi*, sung by Caruso, Hempel, Rothier, and De Seguola; *Echo Song* (Galli-Curci); *M'appari tutt' amor* (Gigli); *Pilgrim's Chorus* (Tannhäuser); *Caprice Viennois* (Fritz Kreisler); *Guitarre*, a violin solo, played by Bratza; and Handel's *Largo*, sung by Caruso. The members thoroughly enjoyed the programme, and a vote of thanks was given to Mr. Mitchell by the president, Mr. Watson, at the close.

On April 28th a public gramophone recital was held at the Church House by Mr. Leonard Harrison, another member of the society. This was quite an original programme, with many amusing features. Mr. H. Watson was in the chair. The programme included notable records by Caruso, Edna Thornton, Pachmann, Galli-Curci, de Groot, the London Symphony Orchestra, etc., whilst a lighter touch was given by Jack Hylton's Band, the Revellers, the "Scratchiest Record in Bradford," and a "swinger" record, which were received with rounds of mirth, owing to the humorous "patter" of the demonstrator in between each record. The Savoy Orpheans' impression of the London and Daventry wireless station giving its evening programme was particularly well received. The instrument was a table model of the new His Master's Voice type.

The committee extends its sincere thanks to the Vocalion and Parlophone Societies for their fine contribution of records towards the society's library.—H. GOLDSMITH, *Hon. Secretary*, 18, Salt Street, Manningham, Bradford.

BRIXTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The main programme was intended to be devoted to Russian music, but owing to the unfortunate indisposition of Miss Creer, who was to have given the concert, it had to be postponed. Fortunately the executive were able to provide an alternative programme consisting of the new

issues of the Parlophone and Vocalion records kindly sent to us by these companies, for which our best thanks are due, together with congratulations on the consistently high level, both of subjects and reproduction, which they maintain. Our usual monthly competition, for military band records, was won by Mrs. Scrivener with the H.M.V. Coldstream's record of Suppé's *Light Cavalry Overture*. The rest of the evening was devoted to another of Mr. Webb's fascinating talks, this time on "Internal or External Horns," which succeeded in stimulating some interesting discussion. The meeting, on Tuesday, May 4th, was devoted to the "Old Masters," a very interesting selection from the works of Bach, Haydn, Handel, and Mozart having been arranged by Mr. Sterry. The technical talk was on "How to Choose a Machine." Our meetings are open to visitors, who may obtain all particulars from the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. T. FISHER, at 28A, Fieldhouse Road, Balham, S.W. 12.

BURNLEY GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—On Tuesday evening last, in Ebenezer School, the headquarters of the above society, Mr. Brierley, of the Immanuel Operatic Society, lectured to a full hall on Gilbert and Sullivan operas. In his opening address, which lasted about half an hour, the lecturer dealt with the operas in general and told how, after wading into real heavy stuff one could turn to the Savoy operas in much the same way as one would turn to a novel. The audience were next taken through a concise and interesting history of the lives of these two very popular composers, telling how they were brought together, worked together, and separated by a very trivial matter. The rest of the evening was divided between two operas, viz.: *Iolanthe* for the remainder of the first half, and *Patience* for the whole of the second half. In each case the lecturer first told in a brief and very interesting manner the story of the opera, and then followed on with a series of choice selections on the gramophone. Owing to lack of time it was necessary to omit a considerable portion of each opera, but nevertheless they were in no way disjointed for before starting each record Mr. Brierley very cleverly painted an imaginary picture of the stage setting and told of the incidents leading up to each particular item. At the close one of the members moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer and the response was a hearty one. In reply Mr. Brierley said that if his lecture had been enjoyed by followers of Gilbert and Sullivan and if it had been instrumental in enlisting new followers, he felt amply repaid for his efforts.—Secretary: H. HARRISON, 7, Bramble Street, Burnley.

CARDIFF AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The meeting on April 22nd was devoted to a selection of Vocalion and Parlophone records. Needless to say, the demonstration was greatly appreciated, and we wish to express once again our thanks to these and other gramophone companies who have made our lending library possible by their generous gifts.

The final meeting of the session, May 13th, was in the hands of Mr. T. Huntley, who opened with a recital of pianoforte records: Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C sharp major* (Scharer), which is still one of the finest of piano recordings; the whole of Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata* (Lamond); and Debussy's *Children's Corner Suite* (Cortot). Much advantage was gained by using two instruments and duplicate sets of records, so that the breaks in the sonata and the suite were reduced to a minimum. The rest of the programme was of a miscellaneous character. It was with interest that one listened to Eric Coates' *Selfish Giant*, which proved to be quite attractive. The music is of the usual gay and melodious nature associated with this composer's orchestral suites, though I cannot see that anything has been gained by scoring it for a so-called "syncopated" orchestra instead of the legitimate instruments, while certain beautiful tone-colours have been lost. Progress is undoubtedly being made, but our friends must get the "syncopated" bee out of their bonnets. Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, which followed, struck me as the dulllest and most exasperating string of incoherencies it has ever been my misfortune to listen to. After the interval Mr. Huntley presented the second act of *The Gondoliers*, and we thank him for the pleasant evening he provided. Acknowledgments are due to Messrs. Heath and Dale Forty for lending the gramophones and records.

The experience of last summer has led the society to believe that it would be unwise to continue its syllabus during the lighter evenings, and no meetings will therefore take place until September. The session has been very successful, and we look forward with much anticipation to next winter's activities.—TREVOR PRICE, *Hon. Recording Secretary*.

EDINBURGH GRAMOPHONE AND PHONOGRAPH SOCIETY.

—The society held its last meeting for the season and its annual business meeting at 5, Manor Place, on April 21st, when a programme of recent issues was provided by Mr. Cameron. Outstanding records were the *Valkyrie*, *Fire Music*; *Tannhäuser*, *Pilgrims' Chorus*; *Prayer and Cradle Song* (Guilmant), by H. Dawson (organ), final duet from *La Bohème*, by L. Borj and T. Schipa, and arias from *Aida* and *Robert le Diable*, by Rosa Ponselle and Murray Davey respectively.

The season has been quite a successful one for the society, and, with the recent developments in recording, the programmes have been of unusual interest. The membership of the society, however, is still small, and it is to be hoped that next season will see an influx of new members. The society will resume its meetings in October, and, if sufficient support is forthcoming, it is proposed to hold a whist drive and dance in November. The following office-bearers were appointed for next season: President, Mr. H. Ballantyne; vice-president, Miss J. Nisbet; secretary and treasurer, Mr. J. McClure, 33, Eastfield, Joppa, Edinburgh.—J. H. B.

ERITH TECHNICAL INSTITUTE GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.

At the meeting of the above society, held on April 16th, Mr. E. S. Morriss (member) gave to a very interested audience a recital of records from his library. Mr. Morriss showed excellent discrimination in his choice of records, and all present thoroughly enjoyed the programme. The recital included the records: *Tannhäuser Overture*, Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (H.M.V., D.133). Violin solos: (a) Boccherini's *Minuet*, and (b) *Minuet in G* by Paderewski, both played by Kreisler (H.M.V., D.A.267). Contralto songs, *When all was young* (Gounod) and *Softly awakes my heart* (Saint-Saëns), both sung by Edna Thornton. *Rosamunde Overture* (Schubert), played by band of H.M. Coldstream Guards. The machines used for this meeting were the new model H.M.V., kindly lent by Messrs. Whomes, Ltd., and the Columbia Grafonola, some records being played on each machine in order to demonstrate the respective qualities of these two models. Several new Parlophone records were also demonstrated to the members present, who were all agreed as to the excellence of these new productions.

The Symphonic Poem, *Macbeth* (Richard Strauss), played by the State Opera House Orchestra, Berlin, produced on three double-sided records, E.10423, 10424, 10425, is a really fine performance of this great work. Another greatly enjoyed record was in the series of Johann Strauss waltzes, (a) *Marienklang* and (b) *Thermen* (E.10429), played by Marek Weber and Orchestra. The pleasing effect of the pizzicato movement in the former was especially popular. Then there is another addition to the Wagner series in the *Song of the Rhine Daughters* trio from *Rheingold* (E.10432). The perfect blend of the voices in this record is marked, and, indeed, the orchestral part is so well done that the whole is a really fine rendition. The Indian Suite, *Taj Mahal*, played by the Edith Lorand Orchestra (E.10427) won favour with all, and it was not difficult to read into the music the love story of the Emperor Shari Jehan.—A. W. KNIGHT, *Hon. Secretary*.

HALIFAX AND DISTRICT RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY.

Despite the fact that open-air activities have now preference over indoor recreation, there was a full room of members at the May meeting of this society. It had been arranged that a demonstration should be given of the Marconiphone gramophone amplifier, but the general strike prevented this. An interesting evening was passed nevertheless. The chairman, Mr. W. A. Chislett, gave a lucid account of the manufacture of gramophone records, and by practical illustration showed the improvement which had taken place by the new recording process. So enjoyable was the lecture to the members, and to the writer especially so, that the latter particularly desired to propose the vote of thanks. This was seconded by Mr. N. H. Brear. A competition for military band records was won by Mrs. Chislett, the wife of the chairman. Records sent by the Vocalion Company were played over the same evening, and are now added to the library. The Parlophone May consignment had, owing to the stoppage of railway transport, not arrived by then.—J. S. WARING, *Hon. Secretary*, "Avenham," Willow Field Road, Halifax.

LEEDS GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The monthly meeting was held in the Y.M.C.A. on April 20th, when records of the Vocalion and Parlophone Companies were demonstrated and thoroughly enjoyed. We look forward to these demonstrations with pleasure and members take a great interest in the library which has benefited

through the good offices of the above companies. The annual meeting will be held in our room at the Y.M.C.A. on May 18th, when the secretary will be able to read a very pleasing report. The treasurer will present a balance sheet which will show a favourable increase. Interest is being maintained and arrangements have been made for the monthly meetings being held on the first Wednesday in the month, commencing in September, when we shall have our usual "Open night." The advantage of being a member of a gramophone society is that one is in constant touch with all types of enthusiasts, and criticisms of all kinds and in varying degree take place. We are all readers of THE GRAMOPHONE and realise that we get good value for our money. We appreciate the help and criticisms in the choice of records and the writings of our worthy Editor, even if he is very severe at times. We are sorry to report the death of Mr. Hillaby, who was a keen gramophonist; he had nearly 3,000 records in his repertoire.—HARRY SMITH, *Hon. Secretary*.

LIVERPOOL AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—In presenting, on April 12th, a programme wholly composed of vocal items—with one single exception—it might have been supposed that Mr. R. C. Papenfuss was intent on challenging the worth of the often repeated phrase, "variety is the spice of life." Actually he succeeded in demonstrating the possibility of compiling a thoroughly enjoyable and interesting programme whilst confining his attention to a restricted class of records. All the items were of a first-class order and special mention may be made of *Bridal Chorus* from *Lohengrin* (Symphony Orchestra and chorus under Coates); *Mad Scene* from *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Dal Monte); *O mia Gilda* from *Rigoletto* (Battistini and Moseisca); *Ernani* (Hempel); and of the new H.M.V. disc containing the *Kermesse Scene* from *Faust* and the *Introduction, Act 4*, from *Carmen* (Symphony Orchestra and chorus under Albert Coates); a noteworthy example of the new recording, in which the conductor spares neither chorus nor orchestra to obtain a finished performance.

Recitals of phono-cut records are nowadays all too infrequent, but the neglect of many fine examples of Pathé and Edison products was partially remedied on April 26th, when the president, Mr. F. W. Buzzard, offered a selection from his wide and excellent collection. Considerable interest was taken in the recital, both by those to whom phono-cut records were comparatively new and by those who renewed acquaintance with selections which had given joy in the past. From a fine all-round programme the following attracted particular attention: *O cieli azzurri* from *Aida* (Boninsegna); *Your tiny hand is frozen* from *Bohème* (Wm. Bolland); *Cavatina di Figaro* from *Barber of Seville* (Sammarco); *Overture from Tannhäuser* (Orchestra of Royal Opera House, Vienna); *Jota de Pablo* (Prihoda, violin); and *O Mimi du più* from *Bohème* (Ciccolini and Middleton).—J. W. HARWOOD, *Recording Secretary*.

MANCHESTER GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—The May meeting, which should have been held on the 10th inst, had unfortunately to be cancelled owing to the abnormal conditions brought about by the general strike, and the programme will be carried forward to the society's next meeting, on June 14th. The new record library scheme will also be brought into being on that date.—C. J. BRENNAN, *Hon. Secretary and Treasurer*.

NELSON AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE MUSIC SOCIETY.—On Tuesday, April 13th, Mr. De Luce addressed the above society on the topic, "Russia and Russian Music." He showed how the character of the Russian peasant was reflected in his folk songs, and in tracing the growth of Russian music mentioned the rise of a national school of musicians after the defeat of Napoleon. In this connection the *Introduction* to Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* was played, and later Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Easter Overture* and two of Moussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*. The time after the interval was occupied by a demonstration of some of the records presented by the Parlophone Company, including those of Marek Weber's Orchestra, *The Rhinegold*, and part of *Macbeth*, as well as the two arias sung by Emmy Heckmann-Bettendorf from *Un Ballo in Maschera*. We very heartily thank the Parlophone Company for their generosity.

The last meeting of the session was held on April 27th, when the writer gave a talk on "The Orchestra." One of the records played was *Siegfried's Funeral March* from *Götterdämmerung*, and each member of the audience was provided with a copy of Mr. Percy A. Scholes' description and analysis of this. At this meeting the business of the session was transacted. The officers and committee were re-elected, with the exception of two who have left

the town, and who were replaced by Mr. Nowell and Mr. Sagar. The treasurer's report showed a small credit balance. Many useful suggestions for the next winter were noted. The session has been very interesting, and we hope for a similar useful renewal of activities next autumn.

Communications and enquiries should be addressed to the secretary, Mr. H. C. Wood, 18, Malvern Road, Nelson.—MARGARET E. WADDINGTON, *Hon. Press Secretary*.

THE NORTH WEST GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY carried on in spite of the strike, on May 9th, members walking miles to be present at a well-attended meeting. The first of a series of operatic recitals made up half the programme: All the favourite excerpts from *Carmen*, *Overture, March of Street Urchins, Entr'acte Act II, Smugglers' Chorus, Intermezzo Act III., Ballet music Act IV.,* all excellent records by Parlophone; *Habanera* (Phyllis Archibald), *Flower Song* (Titterton), *Toreador Song* (Baker), *Card Song* (Cruikshank). These are all records in English (Vocalion) by English artists, and the standard of excellence is a remarkably high one, higher, in fact, than that attained by the continental artists in the "Complete" operas. The *Toreadors' March and Chorus* made a good finale. The remainder of the programme comprised the following: *Che farò*, all the principal records—their respective merits caused lively discussion, Edith Furnedge deserving special mention (Aco.)—*Ombra mai fu*, by Caruso and by Homer; *Liebesfreud*, by Sammons (Vocalion) and by Kreisler, and all the more recent *Voi che sapete*. There ensued very interesting comparisons of old versus new recording as exemplified by the two *Liebestraums*, by Backhaus, and the two *Prologues*, by Peter Dawson, also *Le Cygne*, by Pablo Casals.—E. G. LAMBLE, *Hon. Secretary*, 51, Balmoral Road, London, N.W. 2.

PRESTON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—At our meeting held April 6th, a lecture was given by our esteemed member, Mr. F. Cartmell; subject, needle-track alignment, the importance of which is now better understood by most gramophone enthusiasts. He dealt with the subject in a masterly manner; he illustrated his points by drawings on a blackboard, showing the different positions of needle as it travels in the track, pointing out its bad effects with incorrect alignment both in the wear of record, also in the reproduction of what the record contains. His instructive lecture merited the hearty vote of thanks which was passed to him. The rest of the evening was devoted to music of a varied character, commencing with *Nell Gwynne Dances* (German), H.M. Life Guards Band (Vocalion), followed by Roy Henderson in *Freebooter Songs*; his fine voice is well suited for songs of this class. The tuneful waltz *Marienklang* (Johann Strauss), Marek Weber Orchestra (Parlophone) was very much enjoyed, also the violin solo, *Melody* (Gluck-Kreisler), by Tossy Spiwakowsky. To the Vocalion Gramophone Co., Ltd., and the Parlophone Record Co. we again tender our sincere thanks for their generous gifts of records.—W. WEAL, *Hon. Secretary*, 250, Lancaster Road, Preston.

RICHMOND AND DISTRICT GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—At the meeting on April 12th Mr. Yeomans, principal of the H.M.V. Company's education department, gave a talk on the Message of Music, illustrating his points with a number of admirable records made by the new electrical process that has effected a revolution in the art of recording. Mr. Yeomans pointed out that whereas we can take home a novel and read it at our leisure and pleasures it is only the few specially trained who can enjoy music by reading the score. Not everyone can be a skilled executant, yet most can learn to appreciate music, though for this they must have the facilities to listen to a piece of music intently and repeatedly. All music has form, and its complete form must be heard. The composer works to a definite scheme or plan and does not merely wait for the inspiration of beautiful sounds. Further interesting observations were made by Mr. Yeomans concerning the great composers and contrasting modern with seventeenth century music. Records including Bach's *Fugue alla Gigue*, performed by R. Goss-Custard on the Kingsway Hall organ. Luigini's *Ballet Egyptian, Gloria in Excelsis*, by Weeks, recorded in Westminster Abbey, and Stravinsky's *Ragtime*, by Marcelle Meyer, were much enjoyed. The evening terminated with a cordial vote of thanks to the lecturer.

Gramophonists who would care to listen to all the best records as they are issued and who desire to be acquainted with the latest improvements at a nominal cost are invited to join the society. The next meeting will be held at the Free Library Cottage, Richmond Green, on May 3rd, at 7.45 p.m.—T. SYDNEY ALLEN, *Hon. Press Secretary*.

THE SOUTH LONDON GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY.—Beethoven and Richard Strauss, each in their own way outstanding figures in music, were the composers represented at the meeting on April 24th; the former by pianoforte works and the latter by representation numbers drawn chiefly from the Polydor catalogue. The pianoforte items were all by Lamond and comprised the *Adagio* and *Rondo* from the *Waldstein Sonata*; the *Minuet* from the *Sonata, Op. 31, No. 3*, and the *Rondo* from the *Emperor Concerto*. It is some time since a new record by Lamond made its appearance, and the existence of the new recording should show him to us in a very good light. Strauss's music is somewhat under a cloud in many quarters in this country, if not unpopular, and this in spite of the fact that he still composes, but at the same time we have the advantage,

thanks to science, of being able to hear the greater part of his music by means of the gramophone, and, whether we like it or not, can grant him the possession of one of the greatest musical minds of the age. The artists represented included Hermann Jadowker, Claire Dux, Heinrich Schlusnus, the Symphony and Berlin Opera House orchestras. Between these two programmes a short address on sound-boxes by members of the technical sub-committee was heard and received with much pleasure by the members, illustrated as it was by means of selected records and modern methods of recording compared.

The concert in May was given by Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Coombs and Mr. Brockway.—S. F. D. HOWARTH, *Reporting Secretary*.



CORRESPONDENCE

De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, *The Gramophone*, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

LARGE v. SMALL SOUND-BOXES.

(To the Editor of *THE GRAMOPHONE*.)

DEAR SIR,—Your Expert Committee in your January issue make this statement: "We are more convinced than ever that the large diaphragm and the plain pivot suspension are delusive will-o'-the-wisps," and again in your March issue they state, speaking of diaphragms, "As time goes on we become more and more convinced that mica surpasses all other materials."

As a gramophone enthusiast and a dealer of 15 years' standing I should like to give my opinion on the above statements by your committee. I have found that most of the small sound-boxes fitted with mica diaphragms give a piercing "Punch and Judy" effect on all records. There is no depth of tone in anything. All brass bands and orchestras come out with too high a pitch and sound paltry, thin and unlike what has been recorded. There is a pronounced tendency to nasality on most vocal records and the tone is very similar to the old Edison phonograph. The only thing that can be said for these small mica sound-boxes is that "they are clear"; so is a mouth-organ much clearer than a grand organ, but that is all that can be said for it. There is no sonority and depth of tone whatever. This has been the chief reason why the gramophone has been condemned by many in the past. I have always found that mica diaphragms give a raucous tone and the smaller the box the more raucous the tone. With larger boxes fitted with mica diaphragms there is an improvement on all records, but the tone is never quite satisfactory. The same box fitted with a carefully made good non-mica diaphragm of sensitive material will give an infinitely better reproduction—fuller, richer, and much more sonorous tone—more nearly approaching the actual recorded matter than when the sound-box was fitted with mica. I have, during the last 15 years, made thousands of experiments with all kinds of sound-boxes and on various types of machines in order to obtain the perfect diaphragm and sound-box. I may say that the results of my labour have been to entirely convince me that mica-fitted sound-boxes are a mistake. Your Expert Committee have evidently come to a different conclusion. It appears to me that the disadvantages of mica—as admitted by your Expert Committee—more than balance any advantages claimed for it, even supposing that the claims they make were proven.

I do not agree with their statement that mica is least subject to fatigue, or that it has the quickest recovery. I have repeatedly proven this to be erroneous. Your committee admit that the main defects of the mica diaphragm are its variability and its fragility. One would suppose that would be sufficient to condemn its use in sound-boxes. I have rarely found that any two mica boxes gave the same result. Sound-boxes fitted with good composite diaphragms are much more equal in uniformity of tone.

Regarding what your committee say about gramophone manufacturers making claims that their machines are musical instruments giving a "sweet" and "mellow" tone with absence of scratch, etc., the position appears to be this. It is possible to design a

machine that will, because of its peculiar construction, tend to mitigate the recognised imperfections of the usual gramophone reproduction of records. The makers' claims are admittedly usually exaggerated, but in many cases very great improvements are made. Of course, it should be the aim of all gramophone manufacturers to design a machine that will perfectly reproduce exactly what is recorded. I contend that by using larger sound-boxes—longer tone-arms of the straight type with ample sound conduits and more pronounced flares—manufacturers are moving in the right direction, and should be encouraged. My opinion is that the H.M.V. people are evolving in the right direction at last. Their No. 4 box is certainly an improvement upon their other two boxes. Let us have *reality* or the nearest approach we can get to it by all means, but if that reality means the piercing, blatant, shrill, and strident tone that used to satisfy some people, then we will be willing to sacrifice a little of that so-called reality to obtain an infinitely more pleasing tone. Certainly most gramophone owners will agree to this in spite of your committee's opinions.

Luton.

Yours faithfully,

T. A. FOSTER.

[Our Expert Committee reply as follows:—"We do not pretend that all the small sound-boxes made by modern mass-production methods are good. We admit that they are variable, even those of the same type from the same maker, and that many are bad and give thin, shrill, hard, and nasal reproductions. But some are good, a few (by chance, perhaps) are exceptionally good, and we know from experience that small sound-boxes *can* be so made that in conjunction with suitable machines they will give reproductions much superior to those obtainable from any large sound-boxes on the market. Therefore we deprecate the production of still more large sound-boxes, considering that makers would be better employed in exploring and developing the possibilities of small ones. Those who criticise small boxes and advocate large ones have rarely heard what the small ones can really do when well designed and constructed.

It is quite possible for a small sound-box to be shrill on one machine but excellent on another. *Any sound-box must be tuned to suit the machine on which it is used if it is to give its best results; it will never give uniformly excellent results with all types of recorded music (at least, so far as old recordings are concerned), and its best results on one machine will differ from its best results on another.* Failure to recognise these points is responsible for many of the conflicting views which prevail regarding the relative merits of sound-boxes; strong personal tastes for artificial, romantic tones account for most of the remainder.

So far as small boxes are concerned, tuning is a very difficult matter; their best results are obtained, in general with machines having long tone-arms and large amplifiers, in particular, with good external horn machines. On cheap, small machine with trumpety tone-arms and amplifiers they are of little use, and so are the machines.

Admittedly it is easy to eliminate shrillness of tone from a small mica-diaphragm sound-box by replacing the mica by one or other of the alternative diaphragms available. In this way tonal improvement may often be effected. But our experience shows that this is no proof of the superiority of the other diaphragm; it merely indicates that the sound-box was not doing justice to the mica. In fact, the substitution is merely following the line of least resistance and it achieves at the most a second best result.

True, mica is fragile and an amateur attempt to fit a mica diaphragm often ends in disaster, but we see no valid reason why manufacturing processes should be as clumsy as a novice's fingers nor why the gramophile who has a good thing should not

take reasonable care of it. Does our correspondent reject glass for his window-panes, merely because it is brittle?

All diaphragms are variable in their properties; this may be less noticeable with some than with others owing to want of sensitiveness. Further all diaphragms "tire" sooner or later; fibrous ones must eventually "give" as a result of excessive vibration, while it has been known for years that continual vibration causes metals to undergo structural changes, leading to an alteration in their physical, and in particular their elastic, properties. We know of no diaphragm that is more enduring than mica. Further, since we have never heard more faithful reproductions than those obtainable from mica, we are convinced that no other diaphragms in use produce less distortion from their own natural vibrations; we should be very interested to learn how our correspondent has proved the opposite to be the case.

Finally, as an example of a small sound-box which is certainly not thin nor shrill in tone we refer Mr. Foster to the new Orchorsol box, on which we report on p. 556."

MORE BEETHOVEN.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Allow me first to heartily thank you for THE GRAMOPHONE and all it means to me. I have taken it in from the first number and treasure the bound volumes as much as any of my 600 records. I shall be pleased if you could find space for a few of the remarks which I am about to make regarding the great neglect which all the companies have shown to the beautiful works of Beethoven. We are grateful for the nine symphonies, three piano concertos, and eight or nine quartets. But of the 32 piano sonatas we only have four complete works; we have not even one of the trios complete; the 'cello sonatas have not been touched, nor have the piano and violin sonatas with the exception of the *Spring* and *Kreutzer*; then we have the Op. 4 *Quintet*, Op. 8 *Serenade* for string trio; the beautiful works for clarinet and the Op. 16 *Quintet* for piano, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon; and of the wonderful selections of vocal music we have but four examples in *Adelaide*, *In Questa Tomba*, *Faithful Johnnie*, and *Creation's Hymn*. Under the new electrical recording it should be possible to give us some of the vocal quartets and choruses. I feel sure the companies would meet with support if they would give us some of these works. Yours obediently,

Cannock.

S. E. WILLETT.

DE GOGORZA.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—May I intrude upon your valuable space with a subject which, I fear, has been mentioned before? Albeit low-brow, I must confess to a weakness for Spanish and Neapolitan songs, and after seeing that E. de Gogorza excelled in this type of song, armed with my 1925 catalogue I sallied forth to purchase.

To my disgust nearly all his records of such songs have been deleted, and a glance at the previous year's catalogue (1924 H.M.V.) shows that many more had been cut out at the end of that year. We are apparently not getting any more of this singer's records although, even apart from Spanish music, where I think he is admittedly unique, I have yet to find his equal in the few records I have heard, and I cannot let this opportunity pass without pleading for more records from him.

A short time ago there was mention in THE GRAMOPHONE of an article on his records; if this is not forthcoming may I, in the meantime, ask any fellow readers who possess any records of songs such as I mentioned, if they would assist me with their opinions, as I believe for a short time one can get, on definite order, some of the deleted records.

There is one other point I would like to mention. When Fleta's records of the *Jota* were issued they were somewhat adversely criticised; last month one was issued by Schipa and was praised in your columns. Is Schipa's song much superior, for although I know you are not enamoured of Fleta's "wobble," I think you will admit he is the superior of Schipa, who produces neither the power nor tone and whose voice is on the "plummy" side? I ask your advice on this subject, for I find such records are difficult to judge on one hearing in an audition room and such purchases have already led to far too many "duds" in my collection.

With best wishes for your continued success,

Yours very truly,

London, S.W. 12.

JOHN CHEESERIGHT.

[De Gogorza is down for a Celebrity article in the next number.—ED.]

THE FIRE MUSIC RECORD.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—It seems a pity that the H.M.V. should have spoilt their otherwise magnificent record of the *Fire Music* from the *Valkyrie* (D.1079) by two obvious faults. The first one is the absence of Wotan's voice, the invocation of Loge being played apparently by a trumpet; the second is that the turn-over comes at the end of the upward rush of the strings just as the fire music breaks out. This break surely should have occurred just before the four big "Fate" chords immediately preceding the "Spear" motive, as in the Clarence Whitehill record, as I think there is plenty of room on one side even if played as broadly as it is, and it would have prevented that inartistic pause that completely spoils the dramatic effect of the outbreak of the fire. As for leaving out the vocal part, this is "spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar" with a vengeance.

Perhaps a few fatherly words from you would make the H.M.V. see the error of their ways, as we all want the new records adequately to supersede the older ones, and not to possess less completeness than they do.

Muswell Hill.

Yours faithfully,

MAURICE W. BATEMAN.

THE WORDS OF VOCAL RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—I trust that you will continue to use your influence with regard to the issuing of leaflets giving the words of all vocal records put upon the market by the various publishing companies.

While the Linguaphone Company are supplying a need with their four language course record sets, the gramophone people are neglecting a means of increasing their trade by introducing an added intellectual and educational value to their wares.

It is unfortunately the case that even with English songs the words are constantly indistinguishable, *unless the listener is already acquainted with them*. I have listened repeatedly to a record without being able to identify the singer's utterances; then, after much troublesome research, the words have been obtained, and then, and only then, do they become more or less easily recognisable. In the case of foreign languages the difficulty is, of course, further enhanced, and the songs might, for the majority of hearers, be merely vocal sounds, as they convey no possibility of a meaning. Why should this be so?

A leaflet, giving the words as sung, even without the added boon of a translation, would transfer the playing of gramophone records on to a higher plane; for, as the ear became accustomed to the various vocal sounds, a knowledge of the language in question would be unconsciously acquired.

The benefit of such a concession to the public would be enormous, and the initial cost to the publishers concerned would surely be negligible. Which firm will give the lead?

Sidmouth.

L. L. YORKE SMITH.

ORGAN RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Now that H.M.V. with their new system of recording have at last conquered the organ we may, I hope, have some really good classical organ music offered us regularly by men in the *very front rank*. Dr. I. Kendrick Pym, of Manchester, one of the finest living organists, has, I believe, played for the B.B.C., and no doubt gave his hearers a great treat at the time. Could he not be induced to give us some of his Bach and other gems as *permanent records* of his genius on the king of instruments? They would go like hot cakes among his admirers and other lovers of organ music, I feel sure.

Church Stretton.

Yours faithfully,

W. A. HUDSON.

THE TCHAIKOVSKY PIANO CONCERTO.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—One or two interesting reflections arise from a consideration of this beautiful work. Composed in 1874, it was severely criticised by Nicholas Rubinstein, and Tchaikovsky was influenced by his friend to completely revise it, which he did in 1889. Rubinstein's influence was largely instrumental in sending Wassili Sapelnikoff to study at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire. Sapelnikoff was born at Odessa on October 21st, 1872, and made his debut as pianist at the age of seven.

On April 11th, 1889, Tchaikovsky appeared for the second time at the London Philharmonic concerts, and Sapelnikoff

faced his first British audience, entrusted with the great honour of playing the piano part of this concerto under the conductorship of his distinguished compatriot.

To-day, thanks to the gramophone and radio, the art of Sapellnikoff is familiar to and beloved by an almost limitless audience. Who is there more competent to give us an authoritative rendering of the Russian master's work than this great Russian pianist, who is steeped in the Tchaikovsky tradition?

As to the records, they represent the best type of orthodox methods and the correct perspective of a piano and orchestra playing together has been achieved with remarkable success. Here is no noisy piano drowning a puny orchestra; here is no assemblage of blatant instruments seeking to annihilate the unfortunate pianist. This recording is a personal triumph for that versatile genius, Stanley Chapple; anyone less gifted might have made a hopeless hash of this intricate work. Whatever its defects may be, the Vocalion version of this great piece of music is not likely to be ousted by any subsequent one. I defy any lover of Tchaikovsky's music to resist the lure of these four glorious records.—Yours faithfully,

J. C. W. CHAPMAN.

London, S.W. 17.

ANONYMOUS CRITICS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—E. M. Forster's essay on anonymity argues that information ought to be signed, and I suppose we all agree that criticism is often informative, and that incredible combinations of initials and surnames are not signatures! Really, one would like to know who are P. L. and "Peppering," Percy Passage and his brother (?) Newman, C. M. C., K. K., "Albert Dock," and *hoc genus omne*. They tell us what to buy and the Editor tells us to listen to them rather than to him. They would not like it if they received unlabelled discs and were under an obligation to send in their copy before the titles were released, and I beseech them to come out in the open and stop wild guessing of the kind represented by the formula Percy P., P. A. S—, Newman P.—(but no, I won't go on).

Personally I have an ingenious guess of my own, much wilder than the above. It concerns the learned K. K. What do the initials "K. K." suggest to my fellow readers? The only answer I can think of is *Kubla Khan*, whose connection with music is not obvious. Nevertheless, there is a connection, and I hasten to take the opportunity to air my erudition. *Kubla Khan*, as we all know, built a stately pleasure dome in Xanadu, but he did more than that. Musical scales are an important political matter in the East, and *Kubla* issued a decree incorporating *F sharp* in the Chinese scale. Possibly, therefore, K. K. is either "F sharp" or the Editor himself, writing either from *Les Collines d'Anacapri* or the stately pleasure dome in Jethou.

In any case they ought to tell us!—Yours faithfully,

Bristol.

H. W. CRUNDELL.

"SYMPHONIC JAZZ."

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—May I, very briefly, say a word of thanks, make a complaint, and issue a challenge concerning matters raised in your May issue?

The word of thanks is to your correspondent, Mr. Bedford R. Thacker, for his understanding remarks about my letter of January, in which I tried to show in what the critic's work consists, and what is his justification for existence. One thing only I would add to Mr. Thacker's remarks: my letter was less a defence than an attack—a counter attack; it was, I hope, a friendly one, but an attack it certainly was meant to be.

My little complaint is about the short article by Mr. V. W. Russell Forbes, who says that I "damned with faint praise" a record of Constance Willis. The review in question was not written by me. It appeared on page 36 of the issue of June, 1925, and was initialled "P. P." I have not much use for the "faint praise" type of damn; but I heave quite a hearty one at people who don't verify their references.

Finally, the challenge. I thank Mr. Basil Maine for kindly naming the source of inspiration for the Eric Coates piece which I disliked, and which appeared to me (and still appears) to be an ineffective attempt to blend jazz and light music. (That Mr. Maine was convinced there was no such attempt does not alter my view, of course.) The record came to me without any indication of the meaning of the title, hence my reference to this.

The point at issue between us is this: I think jazz is not capable of development; Mr. Maine thinks it is. Will he please tell us, then, how it can develop; and will he be as definite as possible and categorical, on these heads: (1) the orchestration; (2) the harmony; (3) the rhythm—or, as I insist, the present abysmal lack of it; (4) the "development" of the material used—either in the "classical" or in any later sense? As an indication of one or two of my reasons for taking the view I hold, I may mention that it is my belief that jazz cannot develop and maintain its public, chiefly because that public cannot appreciate either subtlety or complexity, and no developed art lacks one or both of these qualities; and it cannot develop (altogether apart from any question of commercial success) because if it alters sufficiently to allow us to say that it is, in any real sense, developing, it will have become an altogether different thing, not recognisable as jazz at all.

The matter is vastly interesting—to many musicians and music-lovers in general—I find; and to debate it properly would demand hours. I may perhaps add that I have taken the trouble to hear all the best jazz bands, some of them several times. I am honestly convinced that there is no possible development in jazz; and I find that no informed musician that I have consulted who knows anything about it, thinks differently. Mr. Maine does. Then I beg him to tell us how jazz can develop—and remain, not an emasculated parody of itself, but the full-blooded, popular, enthusiasm-arousing thing it is. Mr. Maine will observe that I don't deny its powers and popularity. As an *entertainment*—like juggling or acrobatic feats—it is, for a short space, often very enjoyable by anyone. I only deny that it has really anything to do with music at all.

Yours faithfully,
K. K.

THE CHOPIN SONATA IN B MINOR.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Will you allow me a few lines in which to reply to Mr. Chapman's letter in your May number?

Mr. Chapman's view of the recording of the Chopin *B minor Sonata* is not diametrically opposed to the opinion I expressed in my review. The distance between us is defined by my remark, "I have no fault to find with the recording," and his declaration that he was "completely flattened out" by it. *De gustibus non est disputandum* you say at the top of the page on which Mr. Chapman's letter appears, and the very diverse opinions concerning the new recording expressed in that page are a striking illustration of the appositeness of the motto.

But such tolerance as yours, Sir, is not for Mr. Chapman. My disagreement with him, the extent of which your readers can judge for themselves, fills him with "profound astonishment." I wonder why? Is Mr. Chapman always profoundly astonished when people disagree with him on questions so evidently open as this is?

Certainly, he seems very sure of himself in this instance. And, in support of his view, he invokes his experience. Very well; I invoke mine. I have been in intimate touch with the various developments of the gramophone during the past few years, I have heard the *B minor Sonata* played by several pianists with world-wide reputations, and I have myself known the whole work by heart for the past seven years. On these grounds I consider that I have as good a right as most people to an opinion on the records, and I stand by my review of them. But my experience of musical criticism has not taught me to feel "profound astonishment" when others disagree with me. What does surprise me is that anyone who dares appeal to his experience in such matters should apparently imagine that the opinions of competent judges are bound always to accord with his own.

Yours faithfully,

London.

THE REVIEWER.

THE LIFE BELT.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I have refrained from writing previously, although I have been a reader from the first number of THE GRAMOPHONE, because I wanted to test thoroughly the "Lifebelt" and the weight adjuster. Up to recently I was using a sound-box I thought the world of, and I had never heard anything to beat it, the old Zonophone all-nickel box, which, in my opinion, gave the best reproduction of any until the introduction of the No. 4, which is a copy with a larger mica. My machine is a large cabinet Dulceola,

which, with the "Lifebelt," adjuster, and No. 4 box, gives the most perfect reproduction I have ever heard, even better I think than the H.M.V. The result of my combination, thanks to your wonderful advice, is really wonderful, and to say all I could about the way the records reproduce would only be repeating what all the enthusiastic supporters of the "Lifebelt" and adjuster have already told you. I heartily endorse all that has been claimed for them, and invite all in the district who have not yet heard the combination to arrange with me, and I shall be only too pleased to demonstrate it.

Yours,

Wakefield.

GODFREY LAW.

WEIGHT ADJUSTERS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Before I ever thought of tackling the difficult problem of flexibility (incidentally I think I can claim that my Patent 237186 is anterior to the Orchorsol sound-box) I was experimenting with weight adjusters as far back as March 1922. A 7s. 6d. purple label Columbia so soon gave out that I was constrained to do something. I found that an ordinary piece of rubber-elastic stretched under the tone-arm gave immediate relief and saved record wear to a very marked degree. Later on I used a very thin strip of steel spring, which, when carefully adjusted, offered the minimum of resistance in a lateral direction to the tone-arm traversing the record. This idea was incorporated in my patent application of March last year, as I realised that something in the way of weight adjusting is essential with the "Lifebelt." In conjunction with this method I now use a weight suspended immediately behind the tone-arm (conveniently detachable) by means of a ring round the tone-arm and a stout wire hook projecting from it for the purpose: a seven-ounce weight thus counter-balancing sound-box and "Lifebelt" also weighing seven ounces. The steel strip is so arranged that the resistance causes the needle to travel across the back of a single-sided record at the same rate as though it was following a groove. With needle track alignment approximately correct this seems to me ideal under present conditions. The actual weight on the needle point is just four ounces. Anything less than this is, I fear, actually detrimental to the record and the reproduction; as, instead of wearing the hard core at the bottom of the groove, it is the more fragile walls of the groove which have to bear the brunt.

With fibre points one may reduce the weight to two ounces—and save the point at the expense of the reproduction. But three ounces is quite O.K. with fibres, though not less than four is desirable for steel points.

The other night the counter-weight slipped out of position without my noticing, though I did notice the poor quality of the reproduction. When I observed what had happened and re-adjusted the weight, there was a very marked improvement indeed.

To get the very best out of the "Lifebelt" and also to prolong the life of one's records (hence the word "lifebelt") correct weight adjustment and approximately correct needle-track alignment are very desirable qualities. At the risk of repetition, the vitally important matter of cutting back the arm to make room for the flexible connector must not be forgotten.

I should like, if I may, to add to your slogan: "Take a Lifebelt with you on the high C's and the deep C's too."

Yours truly,

Silvinton Rectory,
Nr. Kidderminster.

(REVD.) L. D. GRIFFITH.

P.S.—Obviously the above does not apply to goose-necks, for which I observe you are supplying what appears to be a very efficient weight adjuster.—L. D. G.

MISCELLANEOUS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—I was much interested by Mr. Wing's letter in your May issue. He very wisely notes that some composers suffer as regards the playing of each record by the fact that their work is spread over many records, but he has omitted to mention one important factor—that some of our most valued records are, paradoxically, the least played. Franck's *Quartet*, for instance, is one of the supreme works in chamber music and has been admirably recorded, but it is not music to be played at all times

and occasions, any more than one would use the *Vier ernste Gesänge* as an accompaniment to afternoon tea. I have not kept lists myself, but I should be surprised to find that the records I play most are those which I really regard most highly.

Some of the records included in Mr. Wing's list interest me particularly. *Rout*, I think, and perhaps *Hexenritt* must have gained their place from the motives which induced me to play so often *L'apprenti sorcier* to amuse myself and to startle my audience. As for *The London Symphony*, if it is, as I suspect, the April issue, it must have been played twice a day for the letter to reach you in time—an eloquent tribute to the excellence of the records and a desire to get hold of a piece of music whose attractiveness grows enormously by familiarity. How many of us will have the chance of hearing 31 performances of a work like that in a lifetime? Again, the Fauré *Quartet* (whose withdrawal from circulation I also deplore), both from its length and the nature of the music, is especially fitted for those occasions when only two or three records can be played before taking up some task or going to bed. The first records of that kind which I had, years ago, were the old L.S.Q. records of Beethoven's *Quartet*, Op. 18, No. 2 (Col.), especially the last two movements, which I played almost every night for months. This was displaced in time by some of the Mozart *Trio* records (Voc.), by Franck's *Variations Symphoniques* (H.M.V.), by the two Bach *Bourées*, Samuel (H.M.V.), the Bach *Suite for Flute and Strings* (Col.), the Mozart *Oboe Quartet* (N.G.S.), and now by *Eine kleine Nacht musik* (a recent Polydor issue which I hope no Mozart-lover has missed). And occasionally a vocal record has played a similar part: *Phyllis has such charming graces*, Elwes (H.M.V.), *Faery Song*, Jordan (Col.), *Der Nussbaum*, Gerhardt (Voc.), and *Verschwiegene Liebe*, Schlusnus (Polydor). This last is one of the loveliest songs and one of the loveliest vocal records that I know. And here I might add to Mr. Chislett's list of the best of Wolf two more Polydor records: *Biterolf*, sung by F. Schorr (with Strauss's *Traum durch die Dämmerung* on the back) and *Prometheus*, sung by H. Rehkerper (a fine voice) and filling both sides of a 12in. I wish some one would record Schubert's version of *Prometheus* for comparison. But, of course, we still need a lot more Wolf (might not the N.G.S. record the *Italian Serenade*?) and when will one of the companies take its courage in both hands and give us a complete set of some song-cycle by Schubert, Brahms, or Schumann?

May we have in the new volume an article on Haydn's instrumental music on the lines of Mr. Terry's invaluable work on Mozart? It is comparatively simple to keep one's track among the orchestral works and chamber music of Beethoven and Brahms; but with Haydn the total of works is so enormous and such various pieces have been recorded that a little guidance through the maze would be most useful.

Yours faithfully,

Liverpool.

L. J. H. BRADLEY.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—It was my good fortune to be at Bournemouth at Easter and to revel in the glorious music provided at the Festival. Many of the works I heard are recorded. Three, however, made a deep impression upon me, and I am not aware that they are as yet recorded; hence my letter to enlist your influence to get them done. I refer to Elgar's *First Symphony*, his *Cello Concerto*, and the Ballet Music from *The Perfect Fool* by Holst. I hope the records of the *Second Symphony* issued last September sold well, and so will encourage H.M.V. to record the magnificent first one. You and your reviewers are often complaining of the lack of good 'cello music for the gramophone. What more delightful work is there than Elgar's concerto for this instrument? If played by Miss Beatrice Harrison as she played it at Bournemouth, it would be a notable acquisition to any gramophile's library.

I bought Holst's *St. Paul's Suite* on your recommendation, and it has been, and is, a great joy to me. Now, after hearing *The Perfect Fool Ballet Music*. I want Columbia to record this delightful work also; and I feel sure the owners of the former work will be at least equally charmed with this.

Yours faithfully,

Raunds.

J. C. HORRELL.

[The *Cello Concerto* has, of course, been recorded by Miss Beatrice Harrison and conducted by Sir Edward Elgar on H.M.V., D.541 and D.545. See Mr. Porte's remarks in last September's number, page 175.]

THE LIFEBELT

Further extracts from letters received, in continuation of the series published in THE GRAMOPHONE for January, February, and March, 1926 :—

24. I think all users of the Lifebelt should know of Mr. P. Wilson's simple but excellent weight adjuster to be used with it. Without some such addition the Lifebelt—wonderful as it is—does not do itself justice. With a little care in attaching to the tone-arm I find as a result more resonance, purer tone, better alignment, and consequently less scratch, and *no extra load on motor or weight on record*. While for fibre users the playing of 20 to 30 sides without re-sharpening is in itself something to be thankful for. So pleased am I with it after thoroughly testing it on my table grand H.M.V. that I am going to fit one on to my new No. 25 too. This combination, plus Vitz's sound-boxes, should satisfy the most exacting gramophonists to whom wireless need have no terrors.—W. A. HUDSON.

25. The gramophone in question is a Decca model 2, the sound-box a Crescendo Junior of mica, as normally supplied (A); there is also a 65 mm. box with aluminium diaphragm (B). I had given up using A except for dance music, where loudness was the essential, using B for all my orchestral and polyphonic records. I found B far superior to A; the scratch was reduced to a minimum, and the bass was brought out for the first time, also the full tone ("timbre") of an instrument. B, however, was noticeably quieter in its reproduction. This was while using ordinary H.M.V. loud needles; results were improved by the use of Sympathetic needles, but I still shrank from using A. I then bought a Lifebelt, but dared not cut it, so that, when it was used the only results were flabbiness. But I later read of one of your readers who had cut his down, and I followed suit. I cut the Lifebelt into two approximately equal parts, fitted on the adaptor and rubber ring, likewise sound-box A, and put on the Good Friday music from *Parsifal*. Previously it had been one long shake, even with B, but now it was in the capacity of the gramophone, with a mica sound-box diaphragm. Not only was this the case, the volume of tone was greater, but one could hear the parts far more distinctly; in fact the organ in the bass, previously inaudible, could be heard quite plainly now.

With all my other records a like experience. A gives all the tone, timbre, etc., of B, but no longer does the music sound muffled. With B, however, the Lifebelt seems not to give good results; hence it is now having a long-needed rest.—R. GREIFFENHAGEN.

26. As mentioned when ordering, my instrument is a large table model H.M.V. make, internal horn, and of oak. (This is the model which three years ago cost £22 10s.; the number of it I do not now know.) My sound-box is one of Exhibition pattern, gilt, fitted with a Daws Clarke waxed paper diaphragm, and the needles I invariably use are Clifton Arrow metal needles.

The results of using the Lifebelt on the above-mentioned combination are entirely satisfactory in every way. In the first place the volume of sound is far and away greater than without the belt, the tone is more mellow, or rich, and definition is very much enhanced. I have further definitely decided that the Lifebelt really does make a wonderful difference to older records, ones which, perhaps, as suggested in one or two of the reports on the Lifebelt which have appeared in the December issue of THE GRAMOPHONE, had been placed on the discard pile. The Lifebelt has revealed to me in some of my discarded records features which I had not been able to discern before. In the new recordings the difference is nothing less than astounding. If the Lifebelt deteriorates in any way I shall consider it well worth while replacing it as fast as it goes!—ERNEST JONES.

27. My machine is a Columbia portable. I found it necessary to have the tone-arm fitting cut off, as I could see that the alignment would be hopeless with an adaptor. At first the results were very disappointing, the whole affair seemed far too "flabby," and there was not enough bend at the tone-arm to push the "belt" farther on to counteract this flexibility. I then cut off a piece of the Lifebelt (about half an inch), and an improvement was noticeable. From the start the bass "came through" wonderfully, but there was an unsteadiness in the pitch. This almost disappeared when I cut the piece off the Lifebelt. I then tried the steel springs dodge, and this seems to have eliminated the wavering pitch altogether when I get the affair into the correct position.

When adjusted correctly the Lifebelt certainly does all you claim for it. Orchestral and pianoforte records seem to benefit most. The Vocalion *Wasps Overture* was always an excellent record—he drums came out as well as I had ever heard them on any record,

but with the Lifebelt it was magnificent! The pizzicato in the Intermezzo of the *St. Paul's Suite* was also much clearer. In fact, any accompaniments seem to stand out much better than before, while the solo instrument or voice loses none of its effect.

Worn records are hopeless with the Lifebelt—blast is increased, but diaphragm vibration is completely abolished.

Finally, I should like to say that the Lifebelt has given me all round satisfaction and that your claims for it are in every way justified.—S. HARFORD.

28. This, indeed, has given new life to my gramophone. I have heard instruments on my records which I could not hear without the Lifebelt. Perhaps the most startling result was from the only warped record which I have. There were no signs of any warp when playing this record with the Lifebelt.—J. L. T. SNEYD.

29. I strongly advise all gramophone users to acquire at least one of these Lifebelts, as its cost is merely an acknowledgment fee compared with its value to the purchaser. At the same time, it cannot be too strongly emphasised that compliance with the directions of Mr. P. Wilson relative to the adjustment of the Lifebelt is absolutely essential if the maximum benefit is to be secured.—IVOR JONES.

30. The Lifebelt to hand. After reading the instructions carefully I was able to fix it up in about ten minutes and perfectly successful at the first trial. My Academy table grand, bought in 1925 for £12, has always been considered a good tone, but I was amazed at the improvement. Strong singers like Clara Butt, Lappas, and others are toned down beautifully, band music is improved wonderfully. I am very much pleased all round, and can strongly recommend it.—E. J. CLEWETT.

31. Many thanks for Lifebelt. I am delighted with it, and have found beauty lying dormant in old records which have been favourites before; and records which were not entirely satisfactory have become a source of pleasure.

It is evident that the higher frequencies have in the past dominated, setting up such excessive vibrations that the lower frequencies were blurred or even obliterated. The "damping" effect of the rubber tube evidently allows the lower notes to become apparent, while it does not detract from the treble, creating a "balance" in orchestra which is simply magnificent.—W. J. PIERCE.

32. Many thanks for the Lifebelt duly received. I consider with a Victor external horn machine (my type), it does all that is claimed for it. Exhibition sound-box No. 2: It decidedly mellows the tone of all instruments, improves the basses and the high trebles. It has saved me from buying a new Victor \$275 machine. Please congratulate the excellent parson on his simple and clever invention. We owe him a debt of gratitude for it, and Mr. Compton Mackenzie another great obligation for exploiting it.—DR. FRANCIS H. MEAD.

33. After one month now with the Lifebelt I am convinced that it is the finest refinement for the gramophone that I know of. On my machine (Sonora Prelude model, U.S.A.) it corrects the needle-track alignment absolutely, thereby reducing record wear. That in itself would be sufficient to establish its necessity to the gramophile. But it certainly improves tone. I have always admired the tone of my machine, even to the production of the bass tones, but now with the Lifebelt it is supreme. After trying this attachment in every conceivable form with added steel springs to lessen the flexibility somewhat, I have established what I consider the best position for my machine, and while I do not necessarily find the tone bigger or louder, I find it fuller. Without exaggeration I have heard the contra bass and the drums, where I never heard them before.—BEDFORD R. THACKER.

34. There is no record that I have tried with the Lifebelt fixed that has not been bettered in some way... I notice one correspondent says that no improvement is obtained for soprano records. I get as much benefit from them as from any other. The record which has benefited most is a wretched thing called *Children's March*, a Regal record of nonsense with queer instruments, and they sound splendid. Bird effects, hoots, and banjo coming out very plainly, which were not even faintly heard without a Lifebelt.—JOHN BEATTIE.

35. The improvement when used on my Grafonola with a No. 7 sound-box is remarkable, so much so that I have taken a dislike to the instrument when played without the Lifebelt.—F. W. LE TALL.

MARGINALIA

(Continued from Vol. III., page 468)

By HAROLD F. BISS

6. *The Pierrot of the Minute*—Phantasy. Granville Bantock.

The charming verses of this name from the pen of the poet Ernest Dowson offer an infinite wealth of suggestion to an imaginative composer. So little of Dowson's work exists, the unfortunate poet dying in 1900 in his thirty-fourth year, but the cream of his lyrical gifts is contained in a small volume published by Mr. John Lane, with a highly appreciative preface and fair judgment of his works. Dowson's writings have an individual charm, altogether unpossessed of any emotion or quality of mind that could be considered definitely commonplace or even worldly. His was the pure lyric gift; his perception of music in every form of nature can be felt by one who feels sympathetically with him and can perceive his obscure meanings—never definitely told, but indicated by a delicacy of suggestion intended to reach the instinctive understanding rather than the intellect.

Bantock has realised this subtle delicacy of suggestion in its true sense and endowed his phantasy with a wealth of thematic material which must assuredly approach the poetic ideal. The rapidly changing *motives* could almost represent thoughts, undefined and whimsical, so rapidly do they pursue each other in their dream-like sequence.

The characters are a Moon-maid and Pierrot; the scene in its Fragonard-like aspect, a glade in the Parc du Petit Trianon, with steps leading up to a Doric temple and a little Cupid set on a pedestal near by. It is dusk and Pierrot has come to the silent glade in response to a mysterious message which tells him that—

"Who would adventure to encounter Love
Must rest one night within this hallowed grove."

Strangely puzzled and almost scared by the quiet solitude, he feels himself held by a strangely inexplicable yearning. Soft mysterious harmonies float from the temple as the dusk deepens. In the gathering darkness he makes himself a bed of fern-fronds at the foot of the temple steps and falls asleep. A moon-maiden descends the steps, kisses him, and withdraws into the shadows. Waking, Pierrot casts himself at her feet and commences an ecstatic entreaty, to be told by the moon-maid—

"Mortal, beware the kisses of the moon!
Whoso seeks her, she gathers like a flower.
He gives a life, and only gains an hour."

But, recklessly, Pierrot laughs:

"All of my life I venture for an hour."

The moon-maiden yields to his desire. While she dances before him Pierrot lies on the lilies and gazes enraptured at her graceful form.

A charming love-scene follows, but day is breaking slowly and the lovers stand side by side watching the brightening dawn. Then Pierrot sinks back upon the lilies and covers his face with his hands, while the moon-maid takes leave of him, telling him—

"Whom once the moon has kissed loves long and late,
Yet never finds the maid to be his mate.
Farewell, dear sleeper, follow out thy fate."

The work is scored for the usual strings, *divisi*, piccolo, two flutes, oboe, A and B flat clarinets, bassoon, three horns, two trumpets, trombone, harp, glockenspiel, tambourine, triangle, and chromatic tympani. The opening descending figure, the following three themes, and the recapitulation of the third theme at the end of the prelude might suggest Pierrot in his moods of irresponsible gaiety. The fifth ushers in a dance figure and in the sixth is suggested the love-scene, the horns and strings singing Pierrot's entreaty to the moon-maiden. Following this the rapidly changing themes suggest the fantastic dialogue, the work ending on a note for the horns.

7. Suite from the Ballet *Les Saisons*. Glazounov.

Glazounov commissioned the great ballet-producer Maurius Petipa to plan the *mise en scène* of *Les Saisons* dedicating the ballet to him. Following the brief introduction the variations occur as follows:—

(1) *The Hoar Frost*; (2) *The Ice*; (3) *The Snow*.—The thematic structure of these is not so complex as to render a detailed analysis necessary. Admirers of Pavlova will doubtless recall the setting of the tableaux, depicting Winter, with his three attendants, and the wonderful solo dances amid the glittering snowflakes.

The orchestral scoring is brilliant and picturesque without being in any degree unorthodox.

No. 4 is introduced by a broad 12-8 measure, *Andantino*; the setting, a cornfield with groups of poppies and cornflowers surrounding "Ear of Wheat." A slow valse for the red and blue flowers (No. 5) follows and leads to No. 6, *Barcarolle*, which commences 6-8 with an *andantino* figure. To this dance a group of naiads bearing glittering veils which are thrown in a flowing manner, to give the impression of rain in sparkling showers.

No. 7 is a *Bacchanale*, the setting being a vineyard occupied by Bacchantes, Fauns, and Satyrs. This dance in its several episodes is of a highly fascinating and vigorous nature and undoubtedly the finest and most complex in the suite.

HAROLD F. BISS.

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY

THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMME.

(ALREADY ISSUED TO MEMBERS)

Mozart, *Oboe Quartet in F major*, (K370)

Schubert, *String Quintet in C major*, Op. 163

Orlando Gibbons, *Fantasies*

Eugene Goossens, *Jack o' Lantern*

Sir Edward Elgar, O.M., *Piano Quintet in A minor*, Op. 84

Ernest Tomlinson, *A Lament*

(TO BE ISSUED BEFORE MICHAELMAS)

Brahms, *Clarinet Quintet in B minor*, Op. 115

Purcell, *Fantasies*

Glière, *Allegro* from *Quartet in A major*, Op. 2

Mozart, *Clarinet Quintet in A major*, (K581)

These 24 records can be obtained at the rate of about 11s. a month. Can you afford to miss the chance? Write for particulars to the Secretary,
N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1

Analytical Notes and First Reviews

NOTE.—The reviews are fragmentary this month, as the records did not arrive till it was too late to distribute them to reviewers. But by the time that these words appear we shall have the reviews at the London Office; so if any reader wishes for a criticism of any particular record in the Parlophone or Vocalion bulletins, or of the Columbias not here included, we shall do our best to help. Stamped and addressed envelopes, please.

The most notable records of which the reviews are held over till next month include the *Parsifal Prelude* (Col. 1744 and 1745), Bruno Walter and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which, on a first hearing, Mr. Peter Latham thought extremely good; two *Tannhäuser* records (Parlo. E.10451 and 10452), in which Else Knepel, Alfred Lange and Werner Engel are heard; and the *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde* (Parlo. E.10453), sung by Elsa Alsen. Apart from Wagner, there is Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *Little Minister Overture* on Col. L.1743, conducted by the composer; Boccherini's *Minuet* and the *Serenade* from *Les Millions D'Arlequin* as played by the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra (Col. 9092); the *Euryanthe Overture* played by the Aeolian Orchestra to signalise the Weber centenary (Voc. K.05233); and seven of Beethoven's *Twelve German Dances*, played by the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra under Dr. Weissmann (Parlo. E.10446).

The band records of the month will be reviewed by W. A. C as usual in the following month.

Of instrumental records, Friedman reappears on Col. L.1750 in two *morceaux* by Hummel and Gärtner; Jelly D'Aranyi has a 12in. violin record (Voc. K.05231) and Van Lier plays a *Scherzo* and a *Gavotte* by Florenbassi on the 'cello (Voc. K.05232).

Among the singers, besides the Parlophones already mentioned, the first appearance of Selma D'Arco (soprano) on Voc. A.0264, deserves notice; McEachern gives Hedgecock's setting of *On the road to Mandalay* on Voc. K.05230; sea shanties, now a staple dish in the bulletins, are sung by John Buckley (Voc. X.9786 and 9787) and by Kenneth Ellis (Parlo. E.5583, 5584, 5585); and among the miscellaneous batch are records by Edith Lorand's and Marek Weber's orchestras (Parlo. E.10447, 10448 and 10449), by Moschetto's Orchestra (Voc. X.9788), and by the Merton Orchestra (Parlo. E.10450), as well as songs by Buddy Lee (Voc. X.9791), Howett Worster (Voc. X.9789), Scovell and Wheldon (Parlo. E.5589), a monologue by the favourite Gene Gerrard called *Bibulous Justifications* (Voc. X.9790), and a couple of topical Cup Final records by Sammy Shields, "the football comedian," on Parlo. E.3220 and 3221.

CHAMBER MUSIC

COLUMBIA.

L.1729, 1730 (12in., 13s.).—**The Lener String Quartet : Quartet in G major, No. 19** (Serenata) (Mozart). Eulenburg and Philharmonia.

This is *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* with the double bass omitted. Being without a score and pressed for time, I must confine myself to saying that the recording (new style) seems all that one could wish. The balance is good, and each instrument is distinctly audible without being too obtrusive. The *timbre* too is as near that of a string quartet as the gramophone has so far been able to reach, at least on the new H.M.V. machine. Readers, however, should bear in mind that a scoreless reviewer cannot tell if any of the detail has been suppressed.

P. L.

ORCHESTRAL

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1088 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Albert Coates: **Prelude to the Rhinegold and Ride of the Valkyrie** (Wagner).

D.1092 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—**Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Albert Coates: **Siegfried's Funeral March (The Twilight of the Gods)** (Wagner). (Universal edition.)

D.B.900 (12in., 8s. 6d.).—**Chaliapine, Symphony Orchestra, and Chorus : Coronation Scene** from *Boris Godounov* (Moussorgsky). (Music : Peters, 3790.)

PARLOPHONE.

E.10444, 10445 (12in., 4s. 6d. each).—**Orchestra of State Opera House, Berlin**, conducted by Dr. Weissmann: **Overture to Der Freischütz and Introduction to Act 3** (Weber). (Eulenburg.)

Instruments used: H.M.V. new model, No. 126, sound-box No. 4, with constant reference to a large Columbia table grand, sound-box No. 7.

No imaginative, musically-minded person can hear *Rhinegold* without a thrill of sympathetic remembrance of the six long years of Wagner's exile that preceded it, without any creative musical work. His mind was a battle-ground much of the time. He had not heard *Lohengrin* (and did not hear it, though he longed to do so, for several years more). In the autumn of 1853 he was writing to Liszt: "To-day *Rhinegold* coursed through my veins." Later: "I am spinning myself in like a silk-worm; but also from within myself am I spinning." And what a fury of work he was in; what grandeur in the scheme of *The Ring*.

That wonderful *Prelude* to *Rhinegold*, to be enjoyed aright, should be heard in the darkened theatre, with the feeling of "Now we're off," and the delighted expectancy of familiar joys that is the Wagner-lover's prelude to highest bliss.

As a record, we are glad to have it to add to the collection of Wagner; but it is scarcely a good sample to put into the hands of anyone unacquainted with the master's conceptions. I wonder if it is quite worth while issuing part of the *Prelude* only, without any of the ravishing song of the Rhine-maidens that opens the opera. For the *Prelude* itself consists but of the treatment of one chord; and lovely and amazingly expressive though that treatment is (and finely as the river begins to surge and teem with life, in this powerful recorded version), I feel that the *Prelude* so peculiarly belongs to and runs into the Rhine scene that we ought to have the whole thing, or at least sufficient of it to get us under way. (H.M.V. has already done a portion of this scene, of course—Alberich's seizure of the gold—on D.677.)

Surface noise with a steel needle somewhat obscures the broad flow of sound at the beginning. Horns are effective and the strings are a little metallic—reminiscent of Spa waters rather than of the Rhine's.

The *Ride* is by far the most terrific I have heard. This record ranks with last month's of the *Fire Music* from the same work. In sheer bravura it beats it. But how such short extracts make one long for the half-hour record! I wonder how long it will be before we have it?

Another fine re-recording is that of the *Funeral March*, surely the finest piece of tragic music in the world. The record begins on page 1164 of the miniature score (Universal edition). The motives heard are those of the death stroke (*fortissimo*, followed by the rushing string figure—about a third of the way on side 1), then several from Act 1 of *The Valkyrie*: that of the Volsungs (horns prominent, nearly half-way through), then the theme of recognition between the lovers (trumpet—drop of four notes from first to second notes of theme—two-thirds of the way). Next, while the basses have the theme of Sieglinde's compassion for Siegmund (with a rise of a seventh in it), the cor anglais and clarinet superimpose the love-motive (a rising phrase of six notes, repeated a little higher—end of page 1169). To this is linked the theme of the Volsungs' love and pain. The sword theme (trumpet arpeggio) comes half a dozen bars later (the repetitions of the death motive that precedes it being played much more loudly than *pp*, as it is marked). The first side of the record ends at page 1174, bar 2.

On the second side the hero is remembered—by the theme of Siegfried the Volsung (p. 1176, after the outburst that opens side 2); then, after its repetition, the majestic motive of his heroism (last bar of p. 1180—a third of the way through) sounds triumphantly on the full orchestra. Its extension brings us to the pathetic theme of Brynhilda (with the "turn" beginning it, and the rise of a sixth—on clarinets and cor anglais).

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The music passes into the third scene—the last of the drama—as the procession enters the Hall of the Gibichungs.

The words upon the various “motives” are added (for those who care to note them), just in order to indicate how Wagner moulds together and makes his materials into a perfect work of art. The emotional effect of these processes is, of course, our chief interest, and there is probably no finer example in his music of the evocation of true and powerful emotion. Again and again one is compelled to say, every time one hears him, “Was ever such another master in the world of the theatre?”

This magnificent march yields up its power increasingly, as one hears it repeatedly. This record puts into our hands the means of hearing it as never before, outside the opera house.

The *Boris* extract is the second scene in the *Prologue*. It comprises pages 25 to 44 of the vocal score, with a cut from page 31, bar 9, to page 34, bar 7.

Boris killed the Tsarevitch Dmitri, and has attained supreme power. The real drama goes on in his mind and conscience, as much as in the plot of the opera.

At the opening of the scene we hear the people, assembled before the Kremlin at Moscow. Two cathedrals are in view. Bells are pealing. A procession of Boyards approaches. Prince Shouisky (tenor) leads the cheers. (Shouisky is a Polish nobleman who comes to tell Boris of the rising in Poland against him, under one who pretends to be the missing Tsarevitch.) The people respond to his cry of “Long life to thee, Czar Boris!” with “To the sun risen in all splendour be glory!” The Boyards (basses) join in. Boris appears. (End of side 1.)

He exclaims, “My soul is sad.” Strange presentiments oppress him. He begs a blessing from his royal father in heaven. “May I be true and merciful, as thou, and justify my people’s praise.” Good aspirations and evil means of bringing them about—Macbeth, with a difference. “Now let us kneel in prayer before the tombs of Russia’s kings,” he adds, “and then the people all shall feast.” The procession moves on, to the cheers and shouts of “Glory! Long may he reign.” The curtain falls.

There is not very much room, in Boris’s short speech, for Chaliapin to show his capacity. We chiefly admire the voice, and the suggestion of mood in it. The choir is good and decently balanced, but rather under the power of the orchestra, which has the right barbaric tonal tinge. Those sudden changes of key in the music help on the impression. Altogether a notable bit of the new realism.

Parlophone.—Breaks: Side 1, end of page 3; side 2, end of top line, page 19; side 3, end of overture.

The slow introduction has not quite the velvety sheen we admire in the finest horn playing. The pace does not seem quite clear all the time. The trembling of the strings *ff*, that accompanies the ‘cello’s fragment of the wood-demon Zamiel’s theme, is on the weak side.

The *Molto vivace* is taken soberly. I find too little contrast between the *ff* and *p* tone (on page 9, for instance, top line). The four mighty horn chords there are rather feeble. Agatha’s air (page 11) does not bring the right cheer to our minds, oppressed as they should be by the foreboding music that precedes it. It seems stodgy, as played here. Some little interplay between strings and wind, a little later in this side, is pleasantly clear. The strings are scarcely numerous enough.

I like the contrast in tone-levels (*pp* and *ff*) very well, at the turn-over, pp. 23–4. The end doesn’t come excitingly enough, though it is all well controlled and painstaking; but it needs a touch of devil in it. This is to take off your Weber’s black cloak, to iron out his fantastic theatrics, to make him too respectable.

The fourth side is filled by the little intermezzo that precedes Act 3. It is made up of material from the Huntsmen’s Chorus that comes in that act. Here the solo horns are quite effective, and the little piece is neatly turned off.

K. K.

INSTRUMENTAL

VIOLIN.

HIS MASTER’S VOICE.

D.A.777 (10in., 6s.).—Fritz Kreisler (violin): *Minuet* (Bach-Winteritz) and *Gavotte in F major* (Beethoven-A. W. Kramer).

Kreisler.—Although I have yet to hear a violin record that pleases me more—as far as reproduction is concerned—than Renée Chemet’s of a month or two ago, yet it is clear that the “new process” is being rapidly improved. I am, perhaps, conservative by temperament and slow to welcome so-called advances until they have proved their value, but certainly I found

these two pieces of Kreisler’s most enjoyable. If that “flutiness” on the high notes has not been entirely eliminated, it has at least been vastly reduced. The music too, is most attractive, and in the *Minuet in G* from the Anna Magdalena *Büchlein* many will welcome an old favourite. Kreisler plays with all the old sensitiveness and artistry.

‘CELLO.

HIS MASTER’S VOICE.

B.2291 (10in., 3s.).—Cedric Sharpe (‘cello): *Rococo* (Palmgren-Sharpe) and *The Gentle Maiden* (arr. C. Sharpe).

Sharpe.—Here again I have nothing but praise for the reproduction, though I think the piano might well have been a little louder; but the music is rather dull. There is nothing particularly “rococo” about the first piece, except its name; it is merely a straightforward melody with a tinge of sentimentality and a simple accompaniment; the original piano version is a good deal more interesting. *The Gentle Maiden*—as a song—is one of the loveliest tunes I know, but as a ‘cello solo, and in this arrangement, it loses much of its charm for me. The ‘cellist plays well, but he cannot avoid being infected to some extent by the sentimentality of the music.

PIANO.

COLUMBIA.

3944 (10in., 3s.).—Dorothy Folkard and Muriel Warne (piano duets): *The Bees’ Wedding* (Mendelssohn) and *Valse in D flat* (Chopin).

HIS MASTER’S VOICE.

D.1087 (12in., 6s. 6d.).—Irene Scharrer (piano): *Fantaisie-Improptu* (Chopin) and *Improptu in A flat* (Chopin).

These two duet arrangements are the work of a musician whose scholarship we all respect. If anybody could improve on Chopin and Mendelssohn it is Mr. Corder, and in the case of Mendelssohn I think he has succeeded. The distribution of the music among the various registers of the piano gives a greater sparkle and interest to the piece; and if the working of the melody of the *Spring Song* against the semi-quaver figure of the *Bees’ Wedding* is not according to the score, it is just the sort of ingenuity that the composer would have appreciated. I do not believe, however, that even Mr. Corder can improve on Chopin’s writing for the piano. The performance and the reproduction leave little room for criticism.

Scharer.—I am inclined to think that this is the best piece of piano recording I have heard. In the *Fantaisie-Improptu* I did not detect a single harsh note or other blemish, and the *Improptu in A flat* is almost equally good. Never before have I heard that “pearly” quality which a good pianist can impart to runs in the upper part of the piano so faithfully reproduced on a gramophone record. I notice that Irene Scharrer plays softly most of the time, even when Chopin marks a distinct *forte* in the score, and in this she is wise; she has a sufficient variety of touch to make changes of quality where they are wanted without resorting to those strenuous methods which, however satisfactory in the concert hall, seldom record well. Nor do I quarrel with her for omitting a repeat in the middle section of the *Fantaisie-Improptu*, just as Godowsky did in his *Brunswick* record reviewed in the April number of THE GRAMOPHONE. There is perhaps a slight lack of clearness in some of the passage-work of this piece, and some trifling alterations in the ornamentation of the *Improptu* are not improvements. I could also have done with a rather stronger bass once or twice. But I only mention these insignificant things to show that my enthusiasm for a very fine piece of work is not uncritical.

I have given considerable space to an appreciation of this splendid record, since my somewhat less favourable notice of Backhaus’ disc last month has given rise to some discussion and even to a suggestion by the London Editor that my sound-box was out of order. Now a reviewer’s sound-box is in the same situation as Cæsar’s wife, and so, though no one who has heard it has ever found fault with my No. 4, I have had an expert up to my house to change it and overhaul the instrument. He brought with him the Backhaus record and we tried it over together. Whichever sound-box we used the defect in the *Liebestraum*, to which I alluded, was evident to both of us, a sort of “ting” that gives a nasty edge to the melody notes in the places I indicated. But I think I must withdraw my less severe strictures on the *Naila Waltz*. The fault I noticed is there, it is true, but it is not sufficient to trouble a listener in an adjoining room and no one need fear that it will spoil his pleasure. I am glad to have

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this opportunity of revising a too hasty judgment of a record by a company for whose work I have the greatest admiration; but I consider this month's Scharrer issue to be a far finer achievement none the less.

ORGAN.

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

E.424 (10in., 4s. 6d.).—Reginald Goss-Custard (organ): *Prelude and Fugue in G minor* (Bach).

This *Prelude and Fugue* is to be found in the third volume of the Peters edition of the organ works. Apart from an over-long sequential passage in the middle of the *Prelude*, which reminds us that Bach, like Homer, nods at times, the music is splendidly alive and interesting; and Goss-Custard's playing of it does more than a dozen Widor *Toccatas* to convince me that he is a good organist. His use of the reeds in the *Prelude* is completely justified by his interpretation, and if the pedal *bombardon* (or whatever it is) that he draws near the end of the *Fugue* is a bit raucous, he can hardly be blamed for that. The omission of bars 25-38 of the *Fugue* is a more serious matter, but it was probably inevitable under the circumstances.

Some critical readers may complain that the passage-work does not always come out quite clearly. This may be admitted, but the blurring of the outlines is at any rate no worse than that caused by the echo in most buildings large enough to house a big organ comfortably. Except for this, and an occasional faintness in the pedal part, the reproduction is as good as anything we have had, and altogether the disc is one that should not be missed. We still want a lot more organ records of Bach, but this, and the recently issued *Fugue à la Gigue*, make a very good beginning.

P. L.

OPERATIC

TH. I. CHALIAPIN (bass) with Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Albert Coates.—*Coronation Scene* from *Boris Godounov* (Moussorgsky). H.M.V., D.B.900, 12in., 8s. 6d. (See also *Orchestral reviews*.)

MARCEL JOURNET (bass).—*Devant la maison* from *La Damnation de Faust* (Berlioz) and *Quand la flamme de l'amour* from *La Jolie Fille de Perth* (Bizet). H.M.V., D.A.759, 10in., 6s.

IFOR THOMAS (tenor).—*La Donna è Mobile* from *Rigoletto* (Verdi) and *E lucevan le stelle* from *La Tosca* (Puccini). Duo. G.S.9001, 10in., 3s. 6d.

ELDA DI VEROLI (soprano).—*Air and Variations* (Proch) and *Caro nome* from *Rigoletto* (Verdi). Duo. G.S.7007, 12in., 5s. 6d.

OLIVE JENKIN (soprano).—*In quelle trine morbide* from *Manon Lescaut* (Puccini) and *Voi che sapete* from *Figaro* (Mozart). Duo. B.5145, 10in., 2s. 6d.

H.M.V. *Chorus and Orchestra*.—An interesting addition to the group of selections from *Boris Godounov* is furnished by this *Revolutionary Scene*, sung in English by a chorus that evidently knew the whole thing by heart. Only so could it have been dashed off, so to speak, with the abundant life, vigour, and *elan* of a stage performance. The attack is excellent, the brief passages reflecting the changing moods of the Russian crowd are capital contrasted. The scene fills both sides of the disc, and in part 2 there are some solo bits interspersed with the choruses, in which the "local colour" is rather well imitated. The recording, too, is admirable.

Marcel Journet.—On this 10in. disc the distinguished French basso reproduces a couple of his less hackneyed *morceaux*. One is the serenade of Mephistopheles from Berlioz's *Damnation de Faust*, and I like it exceedingly, though not better, perhaps, than de Gogorza's. The curious rhythm of the air and the bizarre imitation of a guitar accompaniment—just such a one as the devil would play!—are effectively combined. The sardonic character of this contrasts well with the swaying, semi-inebriated manner of the serenader in Bizet's early opera *La Jolie Fille de Perth*. To the latter Marcel Journet imparts a richer tone, however, as well as a delightful serio-comic humour that will hardly escape the attentive listener. Altogether, the record possesses unusual characteristics and is well worth having.

Ifor Thomas.—It is well to hear a good Welsh tenor singing popular Italian solos with a fairly correct accent and plenty of volume. It is a pity therefore that this artist does not maintain an invariably steady tone, as he shows at times that he can—for instance, in the later *cantabile* phrases of *Lucevan le stelle* and the higher passages of *La donna è mobile*. He must be careful not to tolerate, much less cultivate, an objectionable vibrato. But for the

latter I should prefer his Puccini to his Verdi, which needs more lightness and a crisper diction. The orchestral accompaniments are quite creditable.

Elda di Veroli.—These are also welcome additions to the Duophone repertory, not by any means because they are unfamiliar, but because they are both excellent examples of brilliant and pleasing florid singing. The voice is a bright, pure soprano of extended compass, and the execution of the florituri, especially in the Proch *Variations*, is notably clean and facile.

Olive Jenkin.—Much is expected from this singer, who is the possessor of a very sympathetic and musical organ. To realize her ambitions completely she will have to devote herself to further study, particularly if she wishes to sing Mozart and in Italian, which she has so far encompassed only with the aid of English (or is it American?) vowels. Possibly she has not yet had much experience at recording, and will achieve better results in the near future.

HERMAN KLEIN.

SONGS

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

Tito Schipa (tenor): *Liebesträume* (Notturmo No. 3) (Liszt) and, with orchestra, *Ave Maria* (Schipa). D.B.873 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

Peter Dawson (bass-baritone): *The Vagabond* (from Vaughan Williams's settings of R. L. Stevenson's *Songs of Travel*) and *The Gay Highway* (F. Drummond). B.2297 (10in., 3s.).

Edna Thornton (contralto): *On the banks of Allan Water* (C. E. Horn) and *The sweetest flower that blows* (Hawley). E.423 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

Sydney Coltham (tenor): *The brightest day* (Easthope Martin) and *Dearest, I love the morning* (Haydn Wood). B.2292 (10in., 3s.).

The Gresham Singers (male quartet): *The meeting of the waters* (Thos. Moore and H. Johnson) and *The Shepherdess* (Dermot Macmurrugh). B.2294 (10in., 3s.).

Derek Oldham (tenor): *An autumn evening* and *Land of Silence* (R. Quilter). E.426 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

COLUMBIA.

Norman Allin (bass): *Silent Noon* (D. G. Rossetti's *Songs of Life*, set by R. Vaughan Williams) and, with orchestra, *The Clock* (C. Loewe). L.1760 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Edgar Coyle (baritone): *Bright is the ring of words* (R. L. Stevenson's *Songs of Travel*, set by R. Vaughan Williams) and *Eldorado* (E. A. Poe and A. Mallinson). 3946 (10in., 3s.).

William Heseltine (tenor): *Guess you know* (Taylor and Brahe) and *My Mary, sweet and brown* (Stuart Young and Kilner). 3945 (10in., 3s.).

Rex Palmer (baritone): *I know of two bright eyes* (Clutsam) and *The Floral Dance* (Katie Moss). 3947 (10in., 3s.).

Doris Vane (soprano) with orchestra: *O Flower Divine* (Teschemacher and Haydn Wood) and *Waltz Song* from *Tom Jones* (Taylor and Edward German). 3879 (10in., 3s.).

A correspondent questions my right to call Sigrid Onegin "German through and through," quoting the Polydor catalogue. Onegin seems to have been born in Sweden of German parents. Though most of her childhood was spent in Paris she is said to have gone to Germany when she was fifteen. Much of her cosmopolitan training and of her work has lain in Germany. Anyhow, I feel that her German descent is far the strongest element in her make-up, and though my remarks of last month should not be taken too dogmatically, I do not feel there is any need to modify them.

Schipa's record of Liszt's *Liebestäume*, which Mr. Wilson praised so highly as a Victor record (see "An Impression" in the March issue), has now entered the H.M.V. list. As a piano solo I never valued *Liebestäume* very highly. But its whole character is that of broad, sustained melody, to which the piano cannot possibly do justice, but which (as Schipa shows us magnificently) is splendidly vocal. Schipa does indeed transfigure the piece. I still feel that the music itself does not go very deep—still, it is at least sane and healthy, though impassioned.

Schipa's own *Ave Maria* is very well written and effective, but, I think, like too many other settings of the words. In its accompaniment, the strings are as shrill as I have yet heard.

Peter Dawson makes a very notable departure from his usual custom in giving us Vaughan Williams's *The Vagabond*. This fine song seems to be steadily gaining popularity; it has already had several recordings, but none so telling as this. *The Gay Highway* may just possibly be a good song of the same type as *The Vagabond*; but one's first impressions are that the two sides of the disc together offer the ideal object-lesson in comparative values. They aim at expressing practically identical feelings; one has real depth, the other is trite. Dawson's accompanist (of essential importance in *The Vagabond*) is very good, though very slightly inclined to be hard and heavy.

Last month *Edna Thornton* gave us a splendid, very welcome Purcell song. Her record issued this month is less good. Her rich voice gives *On the Banks of Allan Water* just the colour that it wants. The song is made more interesting than in most of its many recent recordings. But there is a good deal of the false tone of the new recording process, and also many false vowels. The popular *The sweetest flower that blows* is excellently done, except for one bad top note.

It seems to be many months since *Sydney Coltham* recorded. His choice of songs is here not startlingly novel. Those who like the two he has chosen could hardly have them better recorded.

Of the *Gresham Singers* I can find nothing whatever to criticise. And in the music there is all the sanctimonious atmosphere which seems almost inseparable from male quartet music (not quite inseparable, as sea shanties have shown us—but those are generally sung by "tenor-lead" quartets).

On the new *Derek Oldham* record (the first for many months, I think) the only considerable defect is one which would hardly be expected from a favourite and experienced light-opera singer: words are often indistinct. A few passages I have tried over and over again, but they still remain obscure. Otherwise Oldham sings with his usual effective, sensitive style. Vocally, he has a slight tendency to tighten. The songs themselves, less familiar among Quilter's, have all the musical flow and tunefulness that one expects of him.

Devotees of Vaughan Williams will have an orgy this month—one song from H.M.V. and two from Columbia. One would hardly have associated *Allin* with the *Silent Noon* type of song, yet the record will appeal to many people. There is deep feeling, and, of course, splendid tone, but there is a lack of sensitiveness. The record which I have played produces at intervals the beat of a tom-tom, but this *may* be the fault of the particular disc. In *The Clock* we are told all about a time-piece which "ticked when my friend was dead," and "ticked when I was wed," etc., etc. No one could excel the sombre tones in which *Allin* sings of the day when it will tick no more.

Edgar Coyle's record is one of his best. The Vaughan Williams is made rather matter-of-fact and heavy, especially in the early part. This is partly due to his fault of stressing unimportant syllables. In *Eldorado* he hardly succeeds in suggesting the spirit-voice of the last verse.

Heseltine's singing of the Scots song, *My Mary, sweet and brown*, would be excellent if he had not indulged his two pet vices—a bad tremolo, and volume at the cost of tone.

Rex Palmer's record will need no recommendation to those who have heard "Uncle Rex" on the wireless. Those who have not will find that he has well caught the spirit of the two very popular songs here recorded.

Doris Vane revels in the brilliant *Waltz Song* from *Tom Jones*, and, of course, finds *O Flower divine* perfectly plain sailing. The orchestra is very telling (its tone is typical of the new recording).

A general first impression of all this month's Columbia song records is that the great volume of sound made possible by the new recording process is being exploited, and that tonal quality is beginning to suffer. C. M. C.

MISCELLANEOUS

Jack Smith has scored again this month with *What did I tell ya?* and *Then I'll be happy* (H.M.V., B.2260, 3s.). It is a fascinating record, as inevitable a purchase as his previous ones. I heard him broadcasting from the New Prince's Restaurant the other night; in *Cecilia* he made the lisping verse far more intelligible than it is on the record, and he added some attractive frills to *Then I'll be happy*. He was no better than Al Jolson in *Remember*, and not nearly so good as Melville Gideon. One trifle which we have not yet got on a record is *Give me a little kiss, will ya, ha?* which is a sure hit. On the whole, as with Galli-Curci or Milton Hayes, I think that we have Jack Smith at his best on records.

The Revellers—not to everybody's taste with a loud needle, but curiously irresistible with fibre—are also at the top of their form in *Where is my Rose of Waikiki?* and *Don't wait too long* (H.M.V., B.2303, 3s.). *The Happiness Boys* are not too happy this month on H.M.V., B.2301 (3s.); nor is *Norman Long* as good as he can be, on H.M.V., B.2296 (3s.); while *De Groot* is treading rather stale water with *Vienna Blood* and *Blue Danube waltzes* (H.M.V., B.2298, 3s.).

Melville Gideon revives *I shall remember your kisses* and *Rolling Stones* (H.M.V., B.2295, 3s.) with even more than his usual charm. Two rattling good selections from *Lady be good* are played by *Jack Hylton and his Orchestra* on H.M.V., C.1261 (4s. 6d.) and by the "1926" *Orchestra* on Col. 9100 (4s. 6d.), while Columbia gives us also two records from the play—the *Astaires* singing and dancing and *George Gershwin* himself playing the piano—on 3969 and 3970 (3s. each). I wish the *Astaires* did not sing so loud. There is another good selection from *Wildflower* on Regal (G.8580, 2s. 6d.) and very soothing records made by a violin and mustel organ on Regal G.8568 and G.8588 (2s. 6d. each). But why are the performers anonymous?

Of the May Imperials, there is nothing to say, except that all the "vocals" are up to standard. *Rudolf Polk's* violin solos (1584, 2s.) were not very good on my machine, and I should have recommended the *Radio Franks* in *Dinah* (1585, 2s.) if I had not had the same done by the *Revellers* on H.M.V. Whether the *Revellers* or the *Sophomores* (male voice quintet) invented the style of jazz-singing, I do not know; their methods are as similar as those of two dance bands, and the two Columbia records (3956 and 3957, 3s. each) of the *Sophomores* are capital fun. Better still is the *Bert Ralton* travesty of the quartet from *Rigoletto*, and his *Maori-Hula Medley*, in which he sings Maori himself—or is it part of the joke? (Col. 3948, 3s.); but these are played by his Havana Band and ought really to be reviewed by Richard Herbert. *Layton and Johnstone* are rather behind the times with *Brown Eyes*, *Dinah*, *Ukulele Lullaby* and *Smile all the while* (Col. 3965 and 3968, 3s. each), and *Leslie Stuart's* piano selection of his popular songs (Col. 9093, 4s. 6d.) is no more to me than a bundle of faded photographs of the favourites of my youth. The *J. H. Squire Celeste Octet* has a winner in its excerpts from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Col. 3943, 3s.), which makes a pair with the old choral record (Col. 3399) of the same music, which has also been a favourite with lovers of cheap opera records; and *Jean Lensen and his Orchestra* have perhaps their best record so far in the little ballet tune from *Drigo's Les Trésors de Columbine* and in *Tchaikovsky's* most famous song, *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* (Col. 3942, 3s.). PEPPERING.

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"FOLLOW THE LEADER"

By ROBERT L. BIGG

IN America they call him the Daddy of Jazz. He gave us a stimulating syncopated cocktail recently at the Albert Hall, and for two hours dispelled the "blues." On his entry ten thousand hands hummed a welcome, and his bows of acknowledgment were as profuse as the miscellaneous collection of instruments before him. It is obvious, of course, that I am referring to Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. It is not so obvious that his novel form of entertainment is both humorous and cheerful; and cheerfulness, I think, is going to remain fashionable for both sexes for a considerable number of years yet. Which explains why dance music holds the sway it does.

A striking example of the art of syncopation was shown by Whiteman's men at the Albert Hall recently. From the opening chords of the *Mississippi Suite* to the final *God save the King*—even this was charmingly played—one did not experience a dull moment. The fun was kept going by such artists as Perrella, Turner, Hazlett, Pingitore, Busse and Perry. Harry Perrella, the phenomenal pianist, executed the solo passages of the *Rhapsody in Blue* with a real "Gershwin" touch; and when he and his companion, Raymond Turner, gave us a series of duets ranging from *Nola* to *Yes, sir, that's my baby*, striking in the meantime every note on the key-board, in marvellous time and tune together, the audience demonstrated its praise very loudly. Nor was it less impressed when Mr. Busse played *Hot Lips* on his trumpet so hot that he went purple in the face with the heat, and Pingitore, the cripple banjoist, perplexed us with the amazing flexibility of his hands: and Mario Perry wrung notes out of his accordion that would make Mr. Deiro blink. Mr. Chester Hazlett and his saxophone provided a few soothing moments. After him came the sousaphone manipulator, whose "big noises" were surprisingly funny: and the "writhing" English horn, as though its performer were wrestling to force out the notes, sent the hall into roars of laughter. An ebullient poke at *Valencia* reminded me very forcibly of a barrel organ, and Bert Ralton at his worst. But funniest of all was that clever artist who executed variations of *Pop goes the Weazel* on a violin, and squeezed a tune out of a pump. His incredible piece of juggling was something which made one consider seriously the vast possibilities of dance bands in the future.

What I have stated here goes to prove, I think, what an efficient organisation Whiteman's is; but with that efficiency are blended good humour and excellent showmanship and above all, Mr. White-

man's amiable personality. It is difficult to associate this cheerful, undemonstrative conductor with that astonishing method of control he has over his players, without which the latter would not maintain their remarkable rhythmic accuracy; but from a close observation one sees that here is the master man who, with a flick of the hand, knows exactly when to rouse his orchestra to fury or subdue it to a whisper.

We need a Whiteman band in this country to make us appreciate fully the much-abused term "jazz." Hylton and the Orpheans are very limited in their orchestrations, and nibble in a fresh field only very occasionally. Naturally the arrangement is the chief obstacle, for there are no Ferdie Grofes in England. A point of interest is that Grofe writes his scores for Whiteman's orchestra, and Whiteman's orchestra simply live up to the uncanny things with the greatest of ease, because years of co-operation has taught them to do that. Here the score has to live up to the band, a deplorable fact it is true, but sometimes it falls into good hands. Not often though; and that is why American bands are considered the best. Yet it is said that Americans are the only people who can play "jazz." Absurd! One might as well say that an Irishman is inferior to a Welshman. English and Americans are born in the world with equal advantages, but the Yankee is given greater opportunity to display his "musical tricks," as can be noticed in the swift transitions of one instrument to another, the interchange of melody and the snappy solos.

No, we want an orchestra modelled on Whiteman lines in this country, if only to dispose of the high-brow comment: "Jazz is an unholy row." Before, however, we reach that dizzy pinnacle we shall have to "Follow the Leader" and collect a few Gershwins and Grofes meanwhile.

One word I would add: If you want to hear a specimen of marvellous syncopated orchestration hear *Hymn to the Sun* (B.2038. on H.M.V.)

ROBERT L. BIGG.

THOUGHTS ON MUSIC

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FROM

THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith St., London, W.1

ROBIN LEGGE in the *Daily Telegraph* says:—

"A most desirable book Many of the criticisms drawn together under one roof, as it were, are of utmost value, the very crystallisation of criticism. The author has done his work well indeed."

DANCE NOTES

By Richard Herbert

THE strike has spoilt our fun this month, and the hope that we might spot successors to the almost too popular tunes which come to meet us at every corner is postponed for the present at any rate. Each striker whistled *Valencia* to his fellow-striker, each lorry-driver hummed it back to his fellow lorry-driver, and the organ-grinder at the corner, disobeying Signor Mussolini's recent edict, took it up in turn and passed it on and on and on . . . So it has seemed to one whose office faces a busy thoroughfare, and his despair has been great. What new tunes there are mock one by their familiarity, so many of them seeming to be composed of fragments from tunes of past years. This is a cruel practice; and not so much because of its monotony, but on account of the memories, sweet and bitter, which it recalls. We still suffer from vocal choruses and from the musical comedy song; but we hope and hope, and rejoice in the other small mercies which come our way. The Duophone records improve every month, while the H.M.V. recording becomes almost uncanny in its realism.

FOX-TROTS.

H.M.V. B.5046.—*The Prisoner's Song* (The Savoy Orpheans) and see "Waltzes." A good record in which the melody is given a fair show—but not to the detriment of the accompaniment, which is quite ingenious.

DUO. B.5139.—*When Autumn leaves are falling*** and *Hymn to the sun (The Golden Cockerel)* (John Birmingham and his Band). A fault of the first, to my mind, is that it is too suggestive of the words. Many, no doubt, will disagree with me. It is in spite of this that I place it high. The *Hymn to the sun* is a pleasant relief from the musical comedy song, but oh, how far short of its original!

H.M.V. B.5044.—*Behind the clouds*** and *Just a cottage small* (V.)** (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra). Jack Hylton has amazing virtuosity at his command, but this month he seems to have fought shy of really good tunes. Both these are rather unexciting, although played with skill and recorded with fine volume and resonance.

H.M.V. B.5042.—*Lady be good, medley,*** Parts I. and II. (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra). This will be in great demand—it is loud and sometimes even rather noisy.

IMP. 1582.—*Close your eyes*** and *Headin' for Louisville** (V.) (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band).

IMP. 1583.—*Then I'll be happy* and *I never knew** (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band). Teddy Brown's Band plays with wonderful verve and real artistry. This record is a little quiet perhaps, but it is well worth buying.

DUO. B.5138.—*Don't wake me up*** and *Mighty Blue** (both played by John Birmingham and his Band). This is much improved recording and a record of a first-rate band.

DUO. B.5152.—*Along the old lake trail** (The Colonnade Dance Orchestra) and *Too many Parties, Too many Pals* (V.) (Ray Sinclair and his Band).

DUO. B.5151.—*Bambalina*** and *April Blossoms* (V.)* (both from *Wildflower* and played by the Savile Dance Band). *Bambalina* wears pretty well, but greater familiarity discovers it to be rather inclined to monotony.

DUO. B.5150.—*Smile a little bit* (V.)* (Ray Sinclair and his Band) and *Oh, Lady be good** (from *Lady be Good*) (Leas Dance Orchestra).

H.M.V. B.5043.—*Roll'em girls, roll your own* (V.)* and *I want somebody to cheer me up** (Jack Shilkret's Orchestra).

DUO. B.51.—*Wonder what'll happen on the old cross-road** (The Burlington Dance Orchestra) and see "One-steps."

H.M.V. B.5050.—*A little bit bad*** (George Olsen and his Music) and *Angry** (Johnny Hamp's Kentucky Serenaders). Straightforward American stuff, played loudly in medium time. Excellent for dancing.

H.M.V. B.5047.—*Melancholy Lou** (Howard Lanin's Ben Franklin Orchestra) and *I love my baby, My baby loves me*** (Waring's Pennsylvanians). Here is perfectly extraordinary definition. One feels that the band is not only in the room, but almost in one's head.

H.M.V. B.5053.—*I want you all for me* (V.)* and *When the dear old summer goes*** (Johnny Hamp's Kentucky Serenaders).

IMP. 1579.—*Oh, Lady be good** (V.) and *Love bound** (V.) (Imperial Dance Orchestra).

IMP. 1580.—*Lo-Nah** and *Dinah** (V.) (Hollywood Dance Orchestra).

IMP. 1581.—*I wish't I was in Peoria* (V.) and *I want somebody to cheer me up** (V.) (Sam Lanin's Dance Orchestra).

IMP. 1590.—*On the Midnight Special** (V.) and see "One-steps" (Greening's Dance Orchestra).

COL. 3951.—*Old fashioned love** (V.) and *Just a little thing called rhythm* (Percival Mackey's Band).

COL. 3952.—*Don't wait too long*** and *By the light of the stars*** (Bert Ralton and his Havana Band).

COL. 3593.—*Nothing else to do*** and *Peaceful Valley** (Bert Ralton and his Havana Band).

COL. 3954.—*I wanna see a little more* (V.) and *Paradise*** (Paul Specht's Canadian Club Orchestra).

COL. 3958.—*I'd rather be alone*** and *Rhythm of the day** (Denza Dance Band). This has a good volume of sound and marvellous definition.

COL. 3959.—*You told me to go** and *Smile a little bit** (Denza Dance Band).

COL. 3960.—*Miami*** (Denza Dance Band) and *Drifting apart** (V.) (Paul Specht and his Orchestra).

COL. 3961.—*Kentucky's way of sayin' Good Morning*** (Denza Dance Band) and see "Waltzes."

WALTZES.

H.M.V. B.5046.—*By the waters of Perkiomen*** (Savoy Orpheans) and see "Fox-trots." Good full tone and fine rhythm.

H.M.V. B.5052.—*Perfumes of the past*** and *My Irish Home Sweet Home* (V.)* (Savoy Orpheans). The first is very rhythmically played, but with a hesitation.

H.M.V. B.5051.—*Honeymoon** (Green Brothers' Marimba Orchestra) and *Carolina Sweetheart** (Goodrich Silvertown Cord Orchestra).

COL. 3961.—*Golden Memories** (Denza Dance Band) and see "Fox-trots."

ONE-STEPS.

DUO. B.5153.—*Picador* (V.)* (Burlington Dance Orchestra) and see "Fox-trots." *Picador* is a little too reminiscent of *Valencia*, of which we have heard almost enough.

H.M.V. B.5045.—*Matador** (Savoy Tango Orchestra) and *Barcelona*** (Savoy Orpheans). I prefer the tango orchestra to stick to tangos and like the Savoy Orpheans' effort better. It has first-class rhythm.

IMP. 1590.—*Barcelona*** (Greening's Dance Orchestra) and see "Fox-trots."

LATE ADDITIONS.

TANGOS.

H.M.V. B.5049.—*Confession** and *Spaventa** (Rio Grande Tango Band).

ACO. G.15060.—*Très jolie** and (fox-trot) *In Your Green Hat** (Jeffries' Rialto).

FOX-TROTS.

H.M.V. B.5057.—*Deep Elm*** (Busses Buzzards) and *Charlestonette** (Paul Whiteman).

H.M.V. B.5054.—*So does your old Mandarin*** and (one-step) *Valentine** (Jack Hylton).

VOC. X.9784.—*Military Mike** (Ambassadors) and *Cross my Heart** (Essex Club Orchestra). Unusual.

VOC. X.9783.—*Dreaming of a Castle*** and *Let's talk about my Sweetie** (Don Parker).

ACO. G.15977.—*Kentucky's way of saying "Good Morning"**** (Rio Grande) and *Smile a little bit** (Atlanta).

PARLO. E.5576.—*Dreaming of a Castle*** and *Barcelona* (Ronnie Munroe).

PARLO. E.5580.—*Behind the Clouds** and *When you see that aunt of mine** (Red Hotters).

PARLO. E.5577.—*A cup of coffee** and *Moon Deer*** (Vincent Lopez).

WALTZES.

PARLO. E.5575.—*Always* and *In the middle of the night** (Vincent Lopez).

PARLO. E.10449 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—*Pester Waltz** (Johann Strauss) (Mark Weber). Two parts.

N.B.—In the above lists the titles of the best records are printed in heavy type (Clarendon), the titles above the line only in the list of fox-trots being in order of merit. Asterisks have been used as an additional method of pointing out comparative merit. (V.) after the name of a tune indicates the presence of a vocal chorus.* All the records are 10in., the H.M.V.'s and Columbias being priced at 3s., the Duophones at 2s. 6d., and Imperials at 2s.

TRANSLATIONS

(Contributed by H. F. V. LITTLE)

CARO MIO BEN

(Giordani.)

Butt, H.M.V., 2-053210, 12in., s.s., d. blue.
de Gogorza, H.M.V., D.B.323, 12in., d.s., red.
Galli-Curci, H.M.V., D.A.217, 10in., d.s., red.
Lett, H.M.V., E.345, 10in., d.s., black.
Onegin, Bruns., 10161, 10in., d.s., violet.
Schlusnus, Polydor, 72800, 12in., d.s., red.
Schwarz, Polydor, 72537, 12in., d.s., red.

Caro mio ben, credimi almen,
My dear love, believe me pray,
Senza di te languisce il cor ;
Without thee my heart is languishing.
Caro mio ben, senza di te languisce il cor.
Il tuo fedel sospira ognor ;
Thy faithful one is ever sighing ;
Cessa, crudel, tanto rigor,
Cease, cruel one, such unkindness !
Cessa, crudel, :| tanto rigor ! :|
Caro mio ben . . . etc.

DIE FRIST IST UM

(Der fliegende Holländer (Flying Dutchman)—Wagner.)
Jerger, Polydor, 65649, 12in., d.s., black.
Lattermann, Polydor, 65683, 12in., d.s., black.

Die Frist ist um, und abermals verstrichen
The term is ended and once more seven years
Sind sieben Jahr'. Voll Überdruß wirft mich
Have passed away. Disdainfully the sea
Das Meer ans Land. Ha, stolzer Ozean !
Casts me ashore. Ha, proud ocean !
In kurzer Frist sollst du mich wieder tragen !
Shortly thou shalt carry me again !
Dein Trotz ist beugsam, doch ewig meine Qual !
Thy spite is yielding, but endless is my torture !
Das Heil, das auf dem Land' ich suche, nie
Redemption, for which I seek on land, never
Werd' ich es finden ! Euch, des Weltmeers Fluten,
Shall I find ! To you, ocean waves,
Bleib' ich getreu bis eure letzte Welle
I shall be faithful till your last wave
Sich bricht, und euer letztes Nass verfliegt !—
Shall crash and your last drop shall vanish !—
Wie oft in Meeres tiefsten Schlund
How oft, where deepest yawns the sea,
Stürzt' ich voll Sehnsucht mich hinab ;
Have I plunged in, with ardent longing ;
Doch ach, den Tod, ich fand ihn nicht !
Yet death, alas, I found not !
Da, wo der Schiffe furchtbar Grab,
Where vessels find an awful grave
Trieb mein Schiff ich zum Klippengrund ;
I steered my ship towards the rocks ;
Doch ach, mein Grab, es schloss sich nicht !
But ah, no grave closed over me !
Verhöhnend droht' ich dem Piraten,
The pirate tauntingly I threatened,

Im wilden Kampfe hofft' ich Tod ;
In combat fierce I hoped for death ;
"Hier," rief ich, "Zeige deine Taten !"
I cried "Here, show what you can do !"
Von Schätzen voll ist Schiff und Boot !"
With treasure ship and boat are filled !"
Doch ach, des Meer's barbar'scher Sohn
Alas, in vain ! The ruthless sea-lord
Schlägt bang das Kreuz und flieht davon.
Crossed himself and fled, dismayed.
Wie oft in Meeres . . . Klippengrund.
Nirgends ein Grab ! Niemals der Tod !
Nowhere a grave ! Never to die !
:| Dies der Verdammnis Schreckgebot. :|
That is the awful sentence of damnation.

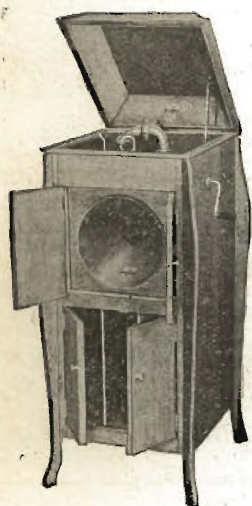
DICH FRAGE ICH, GEPRIES'NER ENGEL GOTTES

(Der fliegende Holländer (Flying Dutchman)—Wagner.)
Lattermann, Polydor, 65683, 12in., d.s., black.
The conclusion of "Die Frist ist um."

:| Dich frage ich, gepries'ner Engel Gottes,
I ask of thee, Almighty's blessed angel,
Der meines Heils Bedingung mir gewann,
Who didst secure the terms for my release,
War ich Unsel'ger Spielwerk deines Spottes,
Oh, wretched me, was I the sport of thy derision,
Als die Erlösung du mir zeigtest an ? :|
When to salvation thou didst point the way ?
Vergeb'ne Hoffnung ! Furchbar eitler Wahn !
Idle hope ! Horribly vain delusion !
Um ew'ge Treu' auf Erden, ist's getan !
Undying faith on earth exists no more !
Nur eine Hoffnung soll mir bleiben,
Only one hope is left to me,
Nur eine unerschüttert steh'n ;
One hope alone stands firm ;
So lang' der Erde Keim' auch treiben,
Long though life on the earth may endure,
So muss sie doch zugrunde geh'n.
Yet there must come an end to all.
Tag des Gerichtes ! Jüngster Tag !
Day of judgment ! Day of doom !
Wann brichst du an in meine Nacht ?
When wilt thou burst upon my night ?
Wann dröhnt er, der Vernichtungsschlag,
When will there sound that crash of doom,
Mit dem die Welt zusammenkracht ?
At which the universe will crumble ?
:| Wann alle Toten aufersteh'n, :|
When all the dead shall rise again,
:| Dann werde ich in Nichts vergeh'n ! :|
Then I, at last, shall cease to be !
Wann alle Toten aufersteh'n,
Dann werde ich :| in Nichts vergeh'n ! :|
Ihr Welten, endet euren Lauf !
Ye spheres, roll on your course no more !
Ew'ge Vernichtung, nimm mich auf !
Final annihilation, take me to rest !



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